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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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GMA gives P10B to AFP

Jeepney drivers seek 50¢ fare hike

BY RONNEL W. DOMINGO, CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA AND NELSON F. FLORES

A TRANSPORT group announced yesterday that it would seek a fare increase of at least 50 centavos after the country's oil refiners raised their prices for the second time this year.

Petron Corp. and Caltex Philippines raised the prices of their petroleum products by 37 to 38 centavos per liter a day after Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. increased its prices by the same amount.

The militant Pinagkaisang Samahan ng mga Tsiper at Operatoryos Nationwide (Piston) said that a 50-centavo increase in jeepney fare would be barely enough to cushion the effects of the oil price increase on the public transport sector.

"This latest increase is too much for us," Piston chair Medardo Roda said.

On May 23, the oil companies raised their prices by 42 to 49 centavos per liter.

"The President should do something about this. (The situation) is much worse now than during the time of Estrada," Roda said.

But the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Associations of the Philippines (Fejodap) said it was not inclined to ask for a fare increase because of its negative impact on the economy.

The Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board (LTFRB) is currently hearing the petition of another transport group, the Philippine Confederation of Drivers Organizations-Association of Concerned Transport Operators (PCDO-ACTO), for a fare increase. The group filed the petition after Caltex raised its prices in May.

Earlier in the day, members of

JEEPNEY/ A16



LARGER-THAN-LIFE mural of President Macapagal makes an arresting backdrop to the marching officers and men of the Philippine Air Force as part of its 54th anniversary rites on Monday.

President's priority bill to raise soldiers' salaries

BY JULIET L. JAVELLANA AND TJ BURGONIO

THE MILITARY, particularly the Philippine Air Force, has been "doing so much with so little," President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said, declaring that she would be the second commander in chief surnamed Macapagal to modernize the PAF and give its men and women higher pay.

The President promised her full support to the ill-equipped PAF on the occasion of its 54th anniversary. In a speech delivered at Villamor Air Base, she ordered the immediate release of P10 billion earmarked for the modernization of the Armed Forces, and announced the grant by the US government of an additional C-130 cargo plane and five refurbished Huey helicopters.

She also said she had "agreed in principle" to acquire air sensor surveillance for the PAF to thwart not only hostage-taking by the extremist Abu Sayyaf but also smuggling, illegal fishing and the entry of foreign poachers into Philippine territory.

To upgrade the living standards of soldiers, the President announced that she would submit to the 12th Congress an administration priority bill seeking to raise the salary of soldiers to the level of teachers.

"Within the decade, we should have no more impoverished soldiers," she said, adding: "I trust that the bill I signed into law

last March granting tax exemptions on benefits and allowances of the AFP is now being implemented."

During the program, PAF chief Lt. Gen. Benjamin Defensor extolled the President's late father, President Diosdado Macapagal, for seeing the command through one of its most glorious periods.

The President urged the PAF "to carry on with your dedication, professionalism and inspiring courage, and be assured that you have the full support of the second Macapagal who is commander in chief."

She also put an end to the many years of battle by 224 soldiers' families living in a portion of the National Shrine, site of the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

She said she would reissue a proclamation issued by her father allocating a portion of the shrine to soldiers' housing, and which was set aside during the Marcos regime. (See story on Page 16.)

The President said she decided to increase the AFP modernization fund this year

GMA/ A16

'Military operations hinder release of hostages'

BY ALEXANDER M. YOUNG, JULIE ALIPALA-INOT AND CARLITO PABLO

ISABELA CITY, Basilan—An informant claiming to have direct contact with the Abu Sayyaf yesterday said reports of the impending release of Dos Palmas hostages Lalaine Chua and Luis Bautista were "mere speculation."

The informant, who asked that he not be named, said he spoke yesterday with Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Sabaya, who insisted that the bandit group was still holding the two hostages.

According to the informant, continued military offensives are hindering the release, which a self-styled negotiator earlier said was due in 48 hours.

"(The Abu Sayyaf wants) the military to stay away from the release site, even if temporarily, so that Chua and Bautista can be turned over to their families and the government," he said.

The informant also said Sabaya just laughed off reports that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front had custody of the two hostages.

Reports floated yesterday that after accepting the ransom payments for Chua and Bautista, Sabaya turned them over to an MILF "commander" named Usman Lidjal so the secessionist group could also demand ransom.

Another report said the two had been "intercepted" by the MILF group.

But MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu de

MILITARY/ A16

'Ador' wants new test; Ping seeks probe

BY JEROME ANING, ARMAND N. NOCUM AND CATHY C. YAMSUAN

"ADOR," a former civilian agent of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, last night demanded to take an "independent" polygraph test witnessed

by representatives of the press, fearing that he failed one administered earlier yesterday at the National Bureau of Investigation.

Ador (not his real name) voluntarily took the lie detector test and underwent another round of interrogation in the hope of bolstering his claims that Sen. Panfilo Lacson

and his top aides had hatched a plot to destabilize the Macapagal administration and had ordered a number of kidnappings.

On his first day of work as a senator, Lacson, a former Philippine National Police chief, said he would ask his fellow lawmakers to investigate Ador's charges.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who chairs the national security and defense committee, said he would co-author a resolution seeking an inquiry.

"To (Lacson), it is crucial that the issue be investigated, it should not be left hanging," Biazon told reporters.

In a news briefing, Lacson said

he was determined to find out who is pulling the strings of the former agent, who Lacson alleges is acting on the orders of PNP intelligence chief Reynaldo Berruya.

Lacson said he was sure that Berruya is "very much part of it, but who is behind Berruya is another matter."

ADOR WANTS/ A15

ILUSORIO BURIAL

Baguio club security tightened

BY VINCENT CABREZA
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The exclusive Baguio Country Club yesterday enforced abnormally tight security, asking for police reinforcements as it prepared to receive the ashes of its founder and chair, 88-year-old Potenciano Ilusorio.

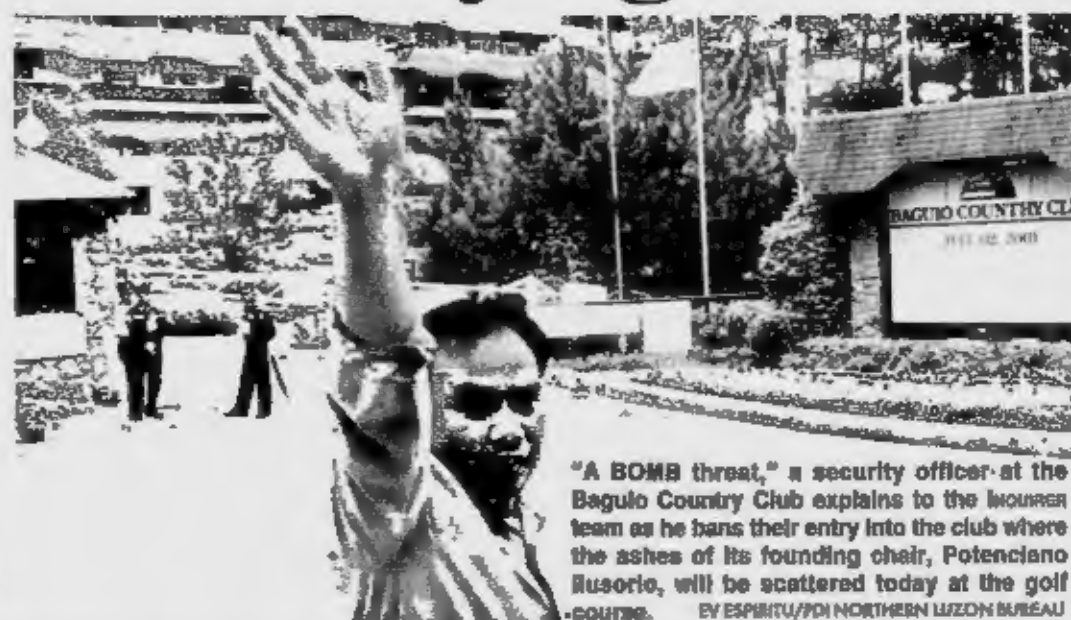
A security guard at the club's gates said that there was a "bomb threat" to explain the unusually thorough vehicle checks.

But as a club member said, the real bomb to watch out for is how the six Ilusorio children and their mother would resolve a long-running family feud that will have serious implications for the 96-year-old country club.

"This is what we expect for a bombshell really, not the scattering of Nanoy Ilusorio's ashes," he said.

Ilusorio died on Thursday and was cremated the same day. His death left unresolved a family

BAGUIO/ A16



"A BOMB threat," a security officer at the Baguio Country Club explains to the Inquirer team as he bans their entry into the club where the ashes of its founding chair, Potenciano Ilusorio, will be scattered today at the golf course. BY ESPINOSA/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU



Ador story sparks network war

BY CATHY C. YAMSUAN AND LEAH SALTERIO
FOR GIVING interviews to only one radio station, the former civilian agent known only as Ador has sparked some more verbal swordplay between network rivals ABS-CBN and GMA-7.

The latest dueling

ADOR STORY/ A15

JDV is it in race for speakership

ROCKY NAZARENO AND JULIET L. JAVELLANA

REP. Jose De Venecia is it.

With his unswerving pursuit of the speakership of the House of Representatives in the incoming 12th Congress that opens on July 23, De Venecia is way ahead of his nine rivals in the numbers game. They have withdrawn one after the other in the past month.

Like an ardent suitor who will not take no for an answer, De Venecia, who's the chair of the ruling Lakas-NUCD party, is now reportedly assured of 140 votes.

More significant, President

JDV/ A15

Quiet Mayon belies danger ahead

BY REY NASOL, JOB BELEN
AND ROLY EMBLE
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology reiterated yesterday its call for residents to stay out of the six-kilometer permanent danger zone (PDZ) and the eight-kilometer extended danger zones (EDZ) around Mayon because of another buildup of magma underneath the volcano.

Those living outside the danger zone can return to their homes, said Cedric Daep, chief of the Provincial Disaster Management Office (PDMO).

Daep said there was a decline in sulfur dioxide emission and fewer quakes at the volcano in the last 24 hours, but Mayon's inflated edifice indicates the presence of magma and accumulating pressure underneath.

Mayon was quiet as the seismic network detected only five low frequency-type volcanic quakes and 13 high-frequency short duration harmonic tremors.

Few rockfalls occurred but this was expected as newly deposited lava continued to cool.

Only a thin and diffused steam plume emanated from the crater and this coincided with very low gas output rates of 840 tons per day compared to the previous 8,720 tons per day.

High likelihood

"These indicators of calm, though,



EVACUEES from villages near Mayon Volcano wait in line for handouts from a private relief agency Monday.

are belied by the inflated state of the edifice as shown by ground deformation measurements," said resident volcanologist Ed Lagueria.

Considering the anomalous, rapid decline of sulfur dioxide emission rates from the previous 8,740 tons per day and ongoing significant inflation of the volcanic cone, there is still a high like-

lihood of more explosive eruptions in the coming days, he said. Alert level 5 is still in effect, Lagueria added.

Lagueria said the danger zones must remain free of people because new lava and pyroclastic deposits remain unstable and may

produce secondary explosions, or be mobilized as landslide-induced secondary pyroclastic flows and avalanches.

If, however, a gradual decline in volcanic activity is observed in the following days, Phivolcs said it may consider shortening the extended danger zones from an eight to seven-kilometer radius.

Two patients

Meanwhile, the old woman and little girl who received special gifts from First Gentleman Mike Arroyo during his birthday last week are now in the care of physicians.

Mr. Arroyo had ordered his Bicol staffers to personally assist four-month-old Alaiza Nufiez, who is suffering from a deformed lower extremity.

Nufiez is scheduled to undergo orthopedic surgery at the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital in the next few days.

Her father, Charlie Nufiez of Bonga, a village perceived to be the most vulnerable to pyroclastic and mud flows, thanked Arroyo through a phone patch to the latter's weekly radio program "Kaibigang Atty. Mike" over dzRH Sunday.

Crescencia Alarmin, 86, of barangay Bayuan, who was in need of medicines and treatment for her asthma, has re-

ceived the attention she needed following a brief conversation with Arroyo.

Alarmin, aided by her granddaughter, Emma Abriquez and her siblings, had sought temporary shelter at the Bagumbayan Elementary School and is now confined at BRTTH for medication.

Arroyo spent his birthday here Wednesday visiting several evacuation centers, including the Ogon Element-

tary School where he spotted Alaiza.

He brought with him truckloads of foodstuff and two medical teams from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Some 45,000 evacuees now crowd 31 evacuation centers in Legazpi City. As of Friday, Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor estimated damage to crops from the latest eruptions at P10 million. With an AP report

For Imelda, party goes on after PCGG 'blinks'

BY BLANCHE S. RIVERA

IMELDA Marcos had every reason to party at her family's sequestered estate in Olot, Tolosa, Leyte, after the Presidential Commission on Good Government decided to loosen its hold on the sprawling property in time for her birthday yesterday.

Despite having earlier declared that it would "regain control" of the sequestered Marcos assets, the PCGG softened its position and said the widow of dictator Ferdinand Marcos and her guests could stay at the palatial resort house at the resort while they were in the province.

According to Commissioner Ruben Carranza Jr., the PCGG did not mean to prohibit Marcos from using the 45-hectare beach property but only wanted "to control its use" by the former first lady and her friends.

Carranza, who was in Olot last week to inspect the property, said the PCGG and Marcos would have to work together if either of them wanted access to the estate.

"We're not the owners, we're just the sequestering authority," Carranza said in explaining the PCGG decision to allow Marcos to use the property. "Sequestration is not ownership, but neither is her ownership absolute."

"There's a pavilion. If she wants to use that (for the party), she can use it," he said.

Carranza also said the PCGG's main thrust was to prevent the dissipation of the Marcos assets pending litigation, and to protect the property in physical and legal terms.

"It's on a case-to-case basis exactly because we can't say if future requests (by Marcos) would be granted," he said, adding that the PCGG would examine the place for damage and losses after her use.

Last Thursday, Carranza inspected the property and ordered the caretakers to padlock the 12 rooms of the guesthouse and the main doors of the resort house to "correct the anomalous practice" of allowing Marcos to use the place whenever she wanted.

He said the padlocks would ensure that the Marcoses would not have "unilateral access" to the disputed property, as they had in the past.

But two days later, the PCGG allowed Marcos to celebrate her birthday at the resort with her friends.

"Please be informed that Mrs. Imelda Marcos and company arrived at Tacloban City on Saturday, June 30, 2001, and are presently occupying the rest house and guesthouse at Olot, Tolosa, Leyte," Renor Daug, PCGG officer in Eastern Visayas, said in a memo to Carranza.

"Proper coordination with our watchman was made for the opening of the padlocks of the doors and rooms of the two houses," Daug said.

Marcos, who was scheduled to leave for abroad yesterday to seek medical treatment, had postponed her trip to challenge what she described as the "shocking" PCGG order barring her and her family from the property.

But Carranza said he "cannot understand" why Marcos should be shocked.

Loi wants death for poll cheats

THIS could be reason enough for "operators" and their contacts in the Commission on Elections to think twice before tampering with the people's votes.

Sen. Loi Ejercito, whose camp had accused the administration of massive fraud in the last elections, has filed a bill that would send Comelec personnel and other public officials to death row for participating in "dagdag-bawas" (vote-padding and shaving).

The bill seeks to amend Article 22, Section 261 of Batas Pambansa 881, or the Omnibus Election Code, by including vote-shaving and padding among the prohibited acts under the section.

The INQUIRER was furnished a copy of the bill by former immigration commissioner Rufus Rodriguez, Ejercito's counsel.

"Senator Ejercito will push for the immediate passage of this bill because it is high time that election fraud is made a heinous crime," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez noted that Ejercito herself was a victim of dagdag-bawas, which allegedly benefited the senatorial candidates of the People Power Coalition, particularly Sen. Ralph Recto. Ejercito has filed four petitions contesting a total of 180,000 votes for Recto.

The bill proposes a penalty of imprisonment of 20 to 40 years for those found guilty of "dagdag-bawas." Participation may mean inducing or attempting to induce any member of the board of canvassers to tamper with the votes by increasing or decreasing the number received by a candidate.

If the offender is a public official, the penalty shall be death under the proposed law.

"This practice should not be condoned by the government, but instead sanctioned to the full extent of the law," Ejercito said. Gerald G. Lagueria

He said she acknowledged the PCGG's authority over the property when she asked the commission for permission to stay there during the 50th anniversary of the Leyte landing in 1994.

Marcos has been using the resort to entertain friends in the province since then.

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'Loi, Ping supporters come a-collectin'

IT'S payback time for supporters of neophyte Senators Loi Ejercito and Panfilo Lacson.

As the two started their first day of work as senators yesterday, their staffers had to contend with numerous persons trooping to their offices to ask for money, medicines, jobs and referrals.

By early yesterday afternoon, some 50 persons had visited the office of Lacson, who was the only new senator to report for work yesterday.

Ejercito received fewer than 20 visitors. One of them, Manolito Arceta, was not shy about admitting that he was asking for money since he used to be a campaign coordinator for the Estrada.

Failing to find the former first lady at her second floor office at the Senate, Arceta said he was going to look for her at her home on Polk Street in Greenhills, San Juan.

"I will just see her at home," he said in Filipino.

The Commission on Elections had earlier reported that Ejercito spent the most to get elected.

However, those who went to see the two new senators yesterday went home empty-handed.

The staffers of both senators said they just took down the names of the aid-seekers. They said this was because they were still in the middle of setting up their offices.

Senate reception personnel said with the way things are going, Ejercito and Lacson are likely to beat Sen. Robert Barbers' record for the most number of daily visitors.

Senate personnel attributed this to Barbers' style where he personally attends to the people who seek him out for help.

From 80 to 100 people make their way to Barbers' office daily.

The senators who are least bothered by the needy are Senators Juan Flavier, Rodolfo Biazon and Teresa Aquino-Oreta, who have posted on their doors notices that they don't entertain visitors asking for medicines, jobs and referrals.

Armand N. Nocum

Explain cut in gov't execs' pay, business leaders ask GMA

BY VINCENT CABREZA
Northern Luzon Bureau
AND CLARISSA S. BATINO

BAGUIO CITY—Leading business leaders yesterday asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to "clearly explain" a Malacañang order cutting the paychecks of senior executives of government corporations, saying that it was prudent to raise the standards of state-owned firms through competitive salaries.

"The government is able to pirate very professional, highly trained executives because of the high pay. It is possible that government financial institutions need very special talents, particularly since these executives are hired to earn revenues for the government," said Miguel Varela, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (PCCI).

Varela gave the advice at a briefing here in which business leaders were told that government spending had been unusually "slow" since Ms. Macapagal assumed office in January.

Rationalization

As this developed, the finance department has asked six of 14 government institutions with the highest paid executives to submit by the end of the month a scheme to rationalize the compensation schemes for their heads and senior officers.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the government would concentrate on rationalizing the compensation scheme of these 14 government agencies. Six of the 14 are financial institutions under the DOF.

The President issued Memorandum 20 on June 26 ordering a suspension of salary increases and benefits for all government-owned and controlled corporations, and government financial institutions and their subsidiaries. She also required the heads of government agencies to rationalize their pay structures.

The government said there was a need to re-channel scarce resources to such areas as poverty reduction, infrastructure and peace and order.

Camacho said he would meet with the head of the six GFI's within the week, but not the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas as the BSP was autonomous and not covered by his department.

Based on data from the Budget Department and the Commission on Audit, the biggest-earning government executives are those heading the two state-run pension funds and the BSP.

The GFI heads and BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura have said they were open to a review and rationalization of their compensation packages.

Some of them pointed out, however, that their salaries were not paid by the government and should not be covered by the order.

Camacho said, however, that even if the compensation was not covered by the budget, a rationalized pay scheme would leave more room for these institutions to increase the dividends that they turn over to the government.

Varela said the government would need to weigh the advantages of a private-sector consultant who could have been proven to be capable of drawing in "clear revenues" for government.

He said the pay scale might have been matched against the operating fees of comparative Asian corporations.

"I think there is a lot of fairness in (issuing Memorandum 20). But we need to know what study they used to base (the pay cuts on)," he stressed.

Felicitio Payumo, the chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority who was at the Baguio meeting, said he would not question Memorandum 20.

Payumo, who has an annual take of P2.15 million, claimed that his allowances, worth P100,000, have been funneled into a special foundation dedicated to the local

Aeta community near the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in Zambales.

"They (the Aetas) will be most affected by the order," Payumo said.

Race against time

The PCCI hosted the Baguio leg of a nationwide briefing on Philippine business and economic prospects, which tackled the government's "race against time" to plug a P145-billion budget deficit left by the administration of jailed ex-president Estrada.

Budget Undersecretary Mario Relampagos said the government disbursed only P9.7 billion in the last two quarters because of the May elections, which automatically suspended government projects.

He argued that the United States economic slowdown, and an apparent recession in Japan, had pressured the government into cutting down new spending outside of the already huge deficit that the Macapagal-Arroyo administration inherited.

He said the Department of Budget and Management is in the middle of conducting another inventory to rationalize the government's fleet of motor vehicles.

It is also preparing a "sectoral efficiency and effectiveness review targeting current infrastructure projects."

"We are about to review all projects of government in order to determine which project will contribute to the desired (government agenda). Ongoing projects with low contributions will be kicked out (of the priority list) and will not be funded," he said.

The review team will also monitor the financial performances of all "spending government agencies." In order to outline a "performance-based budget system."

Government had been operating on a worst-case scenario, with the reduction of its growth targets from 3.8 percent to 3.3 percent.

"This means a lower revenue base and a lower tax collection," Relampagos said. With a report from Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **July 17, 2001 at 10:00 AM (local time)** at the Armed Forces of the Philippines Commissioned Officers Club (AFPCOC), Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Deadline for submission of applications for eligibility statements and bid envelopes is on **August 8, 2001 at 9:00 AM (local time)** and followed by the Opening of Bids at **1:00 PM** at the Armed Forces of the Philippines Commissioned Officers Club (AFPCOC), Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) **LTGEN ROY A CIMATU AFP**
The Deputy Chief of Staff, AFP
Chairman, BAC

(PDI - July 2 & 3, 2001)

This early, bill is filed to amend Constitution

WITH the 12th Congress set to start in 20 days, Tawi-tawi Rep. Soraya Jaafar has filed a resolution seeking amendments to the 1987 Constitution, including a shift to the federal system of government.

In House Resolution No. 4, Jaafar sought the creation of a Constitutional Commission that will propose amendments to the Constitution.

Jaafar explained that a shift to a federal system of government would be the most "fundamental and sound political and structural reform" needed to solve the armed

conflicts in Mindanao.

"(There is) a disturbing scenario of armed hostilities in Mindanao and an impasse in the hostage-taking incidents that adversely affect the country's image abroad," Jaafar said.

She said "the roots of the conflict are deeply embedded in our history and culture in Mindanao."

Jaafar said the roots of the conflict would not "whither away" if the country maintained the presidential system of government.

Besides Jaafar, other members of the

House have filed bills before the 12th Congress formally opens this month.

Negros Oriental Rep. Emilio Macias beat his colleagues to the draw and filed the first three bills in the House.

HB No. 1 seeks to modernize the health care delivery system in the country.

As of yesterday, 37 House members had filed 335 resolutions and bills. Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri and Aurora Rep. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo filed the most number of bills at 42 each. **Rocky Nazareno**

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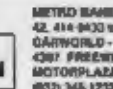
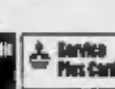
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MEMBERS of the League of Urban Poor for Action (Lupa) lunch on *tuyo* and rice at Mendiola to illustrate the plight of the urban poor as part of their anti-demolition campaign against President Macapagal's declaration that Mendiola Bridge will be turned into a "zone of peace."

JESS YUSON

Urban poor say Mendiola anything but 'zone of peace'

BY JEROME ANING

A MILITANT urban poor group yesterday criticized President Macapagal-Arroyo's proclamation of the historic Don Chino Roces (formerly Mendiola) Bridge and its environs as a "zone of peace."

"There can be no culture of peace as long as the government does not listen to the plight of the needy and violates their basic human and democratic rights," the League of Urban Poor for Action (Lupa) said.

About 100 members of Lupa staged a picket on the bridge yesterday morning to protest the ongoing demolition of the homes of the poor in many parts of the metropolis and to protest the latest round of fuel price increases.

"(The President) is a comedian. How can there be peace if we are here rallying at Mendiola?" asked Lupa secretary general Jess del Prado.

"How can she stick with her new *pakulo* (gimmick)?" he asked.

The rallyers ate a hunch of half a *tuyo* (dried fish) and rice for each protester to illustrate the plight of the urban poor.

"Many urban poor families cannot even

buy a whole piece of *tuyo* for every member of their family as food prices have skyrocketed due to the worsening economic crisis," Del Prado said.

The time would come, he said, when the poor would not even be able to purchase rice or salt.

The group also distributed leaflets to passersby leaflets titled, "Mendiola peace-fu? Bwahahaha!"

Last week, the Chief Executive went to

the bridge, which leads to Malacañang Palace, and declared it a "zone of peace."

The bridge has been the site of rallies by various groups since the '60s. It was the site of bloody student rallies during the early '70s, the massacre of protesting farmers in 1987 and, more recently, the dispersal of the thousands of supporters of ousted President Joseph Estrada during an aborted attack on the Presidential Palace.

Filipino seaman killed in explosion

KUALA LUMPUR—A Filipino crewman was killed and two seamen were missing after several explosions rocked two ships in Tawau port in Malaysia's eastern Sabah state, the Bernama news agency said yesterday.

Bernama said the explosions occurred early Sunday when fuel was being transferred from one ship to another.

Kuik Harris Anik, local police chief, said the body of Hassan Dayung, a 60-year-old Filipino, was recovered from the ship "MV Lady of Fatima," registered in the Philippines.

"Investigations show that Hassan died of carbon monoxide poisoning," he said.

Kuik said the search for the other two missing crewmen—Urban Tarji from the Filipino vessel and Babo Tang, captain of the Indonesian ship—was continuing.

Bernama said four other crewmen, all foreign nationals, were also injured. It was not immediately known if any of them were Filipinos.

The "MV Lady of Fatima" was carrying 160 barrels of petrol, 10 barrels of diesel and 10 barrels of kerosene, it said. The Indonesian ship was a diesel and petrol supplier. AFP

National meet to combat crime convenes today

TO COMBAT crime, Interior Secretary Joey Lina announced that he will convene today the National Peace and Order Council (NPOC) to discuss guidelines for the adoption of a new peace and order plan.

"With the organization of the peace and order councils at the regional, provincial, city and municipal levels, there will be a more effective effort in the fight against all forms of criminality," Lina said in a statement issued yesterday.

He emphasized "the need to revitalize" the Special Action Committee composed of the secretaries of interior, national defense, social works, justice and the Armed Forces chief of staff, to take "decisive action in emergency situations."

Lina said NPOC meeting would focus on the organization of sub-national committees that will implement new peace and order plans to combat criminality, especially at the barangay level.

Lina, who chairs the council, made the announcement following the assumption to office of newly elected local officials on Saturday.

He also explained the need to revitalize the Barangay Peace and Order Committee, whose primary function is to monitor and coordinate the implementation of the peace and order program and related projects at the barangay level.

Lina enjoined governors, mayors and other local officials to immediately convene their respective provincial, city and municipal peace and order councils and adopt measures to improve the peace and order condition of their localities.

"With the assumption of a new set of local officials, I am confident that they will give priority concern to the maintenance of peace and order in their respective areas of jurisdiction," he said.

Lacson airs lament

"MANHID na tayo sa dami ng kaso (I've grown numb over the many cases filed against me)."

This was how neophyte Sen. Pangilo Lacson described the surfacing of one more witness linking him to the killing of 11 suspected members of the Kuratong Baleleng gang in Quezon City six years ago.

"Nothing is new, every now and then there is a witness coming out, people coming out to accuse (me). So, I've grown numb" over these developments, Lacson said in his first media briefing with the Senate press.

Although there is a 60-day temporary restraining order for the hearing of the Kuratong Baleleng case, he and his lawyers are taking moves to ensure that the case is thrown out for good.

"We're filing an injunction because it is our view that the case has been prescribed after two years," he said.

Lacson said he was at a loss why his critics were attacking him even after the elections.

"I don't understand it. What surprises me is that the elections are finished. We have been proclaimed as senators, but they still continue to hit me. Why?" he asked.

He said he also could not understand why his critics at the Philippine National Police, which he used to head, were discrediting him.

"I don't know why the PNP leadership has been treating me this way. I have become close to many of them. I did not do anything bad," he said.

He said he was only hard on the "scalawags and rogues" in uniform when he headed the PNP.

"It's really unfair. It's really hurting and very frustrating," he said. Armand Nacua

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OPINION

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Case for live coverage

THE GOVERNMENT has asked the Supreme Court to reconsider its decision prohibiting live media coverage of the trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada. There is still hope that the decision may yet be reversed, considering the close vote of 8-6.

The trial of Estrada for plunder, perjury and other crimes is a landmark event in the country's history. It may well determine the direction of efforts to curb graft and corruption in government, a problem that has plagued the nation for decades.

Let us consider the objections of the majority in the Supreme Court to live media coverage of the Estrada trial:

First, the Court said that the rights of the accused must be protected, over and above freedom of the press and the right to public information. But will live media coverage of the trial work to the prejudice of the accused? Estrada has a battery of skilled lawyers who can always raise objections when they see that he is being denied his rights. Live coverage of the trial will precisely show if there are attempts to violate the rights of the accused.

Second, the Court said that "television can work profound changes in the behavior of people it focuses on." Who are the people it is referring to? Well, obviously, the Sandiganbayan justices, the public and private prosecutors, the defense counsel and the witnesses.

Live TV coverage will spur the justices, the prosecutors and the defense counsel to do their best and to be on their best behavior. The televised Senate impeachment trial showed that people won't tolerate a poor presentation (which was the initial impression they had of the prosecution's case) or legal hanky-panky and legerdemain (which the defense tried to pull off, to no avail, in the latter part of the trial).

The fear of grandstanding is not real because, to our knowledge, none of the justices, prosecutors and defense counsel are angling for public office. They just want to try the case as fairly as they can and then get on with their lives.

The Senate impeachment trial was another thing. Admittedly, some of the senator-judges were playing to the gallery because they were running for reelection. But even then, an even-handed presiding justice, Chief Justice Hilario Davide, kept the proceedings on an even keel.

In the coming trial, even if it's televised, the presiding justices can always see when a lawyer is going out of bounds, and admonish him or even declare him in contempt of court. The court has enough power to keep proceedings orderly and to slap down anyone who would convert the trial into a circus.

Third, the majority in the Supreme Court expressed fear that a televised trial may inspire another demonstration like Edsa II or "Edsa III."

But the circumstances of the Senate impeachment trial were extraordinary, and they called for an extraordinary remedy. The people went out in the tens of thousands to Edsa and Mendiola to protest what they perceived to be a travesty of justice committed by the Craven Eleven in the Senate. A televised court trial will ensure that a similar attempt to prevent the disclosure of the truth will never succeed.

As for TV coverage influencing the decision of the Sandiganbayan, we must give the justices who will try the former president more credit than that. They are experienced jurists who know the law and the rules of procedure. And if they show any bias or prejudice, the defense lawyers can always petition that they inhibit themselves or they can move to declare a mistrial in an extreme case.

The majority said that US courts don't allow live media coverage of trials. But Justice Reynato Puno disputed this, saying that 47 American states allow TV coverage while only three—New York, South Dakota and Mississippi—don't.

The trend now is toward transparency, openness in court proceedings, and yet the majority would limit public access—through the media—to court proceedings.

It is true that even with the ban, reporters can write about the trial but the reports they will write will go through several "filters" and may be affected by their prejudices and biases as well as those of the copyreaders and editors. Some people may just want their information straight from the courtroom, without having to go through media filters.

Information is the oxygen of democracy. Without that oxygen, democracy and good government will not flourish. Limit the people's access to information and very soon they will be suffering from informational and political emphysema.

People in a democracy should be given the widest, fullest access to information. Give the people the option of pure oxygen—full access to the Estrada trial through a live coverage by the media.



How to avoid losing your cell phone

RECTO AVENUE, formerly Azcarraga, in Manila used to be a friendly flea market for second-hand textbooks, particularly the stretch from Legarda to Avenida Rizal. I used to buy second-hand pocketbooks there when I was a student. Now it is a hotbed of crime. You can buy any fake document there, be it a fake Torrens title, a diploma, a driver's license, a passport, a marriage certificate, a bank statement, anything. You name it, they can fake it. Now you can buy stolen gadgets there, especially cell phones. (For stolen car parts, especially side mirrors, go to Banawe in Quezon City.)

Recto as a center for the manufacture of fake documents and the sale of stolen goods is known to everybody, including the police and the Manila city government. The wonder is why these two government agencies don't do anything about it. Tolerating the commission of crimes has made the manufacture of fake documents an industry so that our documents are no longer trusted. Foreign governments don't accept Philippine documents anymore as proof of anything. Anybody who wants a cell phone but can't afford the price of a new unit is told to go to Recto, where stolen units are sold very cheap.

The popularity of cell phones as a status symbol has made it a most coveted accessory. No teenager would be caught without one. Even drivers and housemaids have units. Texting is a favorite pastime. But because of the high cost of units, those who can't afford new units buy cheap second-hand ones. Ninety percent of second-hand units sold at Recto are stolen.

Many buyers know that what they're buying is stolen but they buy them anyway, not realizing that the Anti-Fencing Law, which penalizes people who sell, dispose of, buy or acquire stolen property, can send them to jail for a minimum of six years. As a result, there is a quick turnover of stolen cell phones.

To supply the demand, criminals and gangs have multiplied. Theft of cell phones has risen and cell phone snatchers have become bolder. Anybody who carelessly uses or carries his unit in

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz



public places stands a good chance of losing it. Worse, snatchers now resort to violence if their victims resist or fight back. Some such incidents have resulted in death and injuries to victims.

A police raid on the faking and fencing establishments on Recto will dampen the crime there, if not totally eliminate it. But sad to say, neither the Philippine National Police nor City Hall is doing anything to stop crime in their midst.

Instead of stopping crime and arresting and prosecuting the criminals, the PNP has issued a flyer advising the public on how to avoid falling victim to cell phone snatchers. Most of it is common sense. It can be summed up in four words: "Be vigilant" and "Stay alert" at all times.

Here are the PNP's Do's and Don't's.

Do's:

1. Buy cell phones only from authorized dealers. (Meaning, don't buy units from sidewalk stalls on Recto and other places.)
2. Record your cell phone serial numbers immediately after purchase. Serial numbers are available in the retail packs of brand new units. If you didn't buy your unit brand new, you can retrieve the serial numbers by pressing certain keys. (Ask the seller how.) Cell phone companies can block calls to and from stolen units if the serial numbers are reported to them.
3. Always place your cell phone in your pocket or bag where it is not visible.
4. Set your unit in "silent" mode when you are in public places and inside public vehicles.
5. If there is an urgent need for you to use your cell phone while outside, go to a place where you are safer—inside stores, near security guards,

near police stations, inside offices or even in comfort room cubicles.

6. Always walk in well-lit places. When walking alone, be on guard for persons following you, and walk toward areas where there are people in case you may need help.

7. Keep your bag with your cell phone inside close to your body.

8. When in public vehicles, be alert for snatchers. Be suspicious of passengers who board in threes or fours and who position themselves beside or behind the driver, near the *estribo*, and one among the passengers.

9. If you fall victim to snatchers, report immediately to the police and to your cell phone company.

10. Always cooperate with the police and barangay authorities.

11. If you want to own a second-hand cell phone, ask for the complete kit and a receipt.

Don't's:

1. When in public places, refrain from displaying your unit unnecessarily. Avoid using it in public. Do not clip it on your waist or carry it while walking or while inside public vehicles. This will only give snatchers the opportunity to grab it from you.

2. Never lend your cell phone to strangers who may approach you to make emergency calls.

3. Do not resist holdup men or snatchers. Do not panic. Follow their instructions but remain calm enough to remember their descriptions and the directions they took in escaping.

4. When inside stores, offices or restaurants, do not leave your unit lying on tables, on top of cabinets or even on chairs beside you. You never know when thieves posing as visitors may come and take your cell phone.

5. When paying for purchases in stores or supermarkets, do not leave your unit on the counter. Put it in your bag or pocket.

Remember, buying or selling stolen property is punishable under the Anti-Fencing Law or Presidential Decree 1612.

It begins with the small things

WHERE I live, which is a housing project, the strangest thing has happened. The parking lot right below us has become a tangled mess every night. I don't know how it began. I do recall when it began, which was around five years ago.

Like all parking lots, this one has spaces for cars delineated by yellow lines. Last year, some enterprising people solicited money from the residents to buy paint to mark those spaces, and those marks are still there. I told the people who took my contribution that the problem wasn't people parking loosely in the right places. The problem was people parking resolutely in the wrong places.

The wrong places were the lanes for the cars to pass through. I do not know the idiot who started it, but he parked on one of them, right in front of a couple of cars, and left his car there the whole night. He made it a point though to keep his car on neutral so it could be pushed when the cars he was blocking had to leave. Before long, other people followed suit. Now all the spaces where cars may pass through are clogged.

What's obviously wrong with the idea is that even if the car blocking your path is on neutral, you have to push it to be able to pass. That is not so easy when you are dressed for an occasion, when it is hot as hell, or when it is raining, which are most of the time. When you are rushing to meet an appointment, moreover, you find yourself cursing very early in the morning. It's an imposition that has no place in any civilized society or right-thinking neighborhood.

It's worse now with all the spaces in-between occupied by cars. No amount of pushing the ones blocking your path will clear it. It's become utter insanity. I hope it never happens, but if an accident befalls somebody there at night, he'll be dead before anyone can get out of that mess to take him to the hospital.

No amount of complaining, and quarrels, seems to make a dent on the minds, such as they can be called that, of those who routinely occupy what should be open spaces. Indeed, the practice has become so acceptable the alternative has become completely unacceptable. Or the practice has become so prevalent that the other more normal and rational practice has become thoroughly unreasonable.

That is how it begins, with the small things. With one person thinking he is the exception to the rule,

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



leading other people to believe they too are exceptions to the rule, and turning the accumulated exceptions into the rule. The astounding thing with us though is the ease or swiftness with which we carry out the transformation. We may have established a Guinness-type record in that respect.

It is the same case with traffic. All it takes for traffic to turn into a gridlock is for some driver to imagine a two-way road does not apply to him, and to usurp the other lane. That is what happens every day on the road in front of our office. Surprisingly—or not surprisingly—the practice no longer elicits a universal cry of derision and a flurry of raised middle fingers from opened car windows. It merely encourages people to follow the lead of the driver who takes the first step, or turn. The movement is as automatic as cars honking as soon as the traffic light flashes green. The vehicle behind the person who first seizes the wrong lane immediately tails him as though pulled by a powerful magnet. And the vehicle behind that vehicle in turn, ad stupidum.

To solve the problem, the barangay officials have roped off the middle of the road a few meters or so before the intersection to demarcate right and left lanes. All that has done is to transfer the mess to the point where the rope starts. The practice has become so prevalent people now actually honk angrily behind you when you do not follow the lead of the idiot in front of you and take the wrong lane too. The norm has become the exception, the reasonable has become unreasonable, the acceptable has become unacceptable.

You wonder how much of the practice of giving money to government clerks and officials to "expedite" things began this way. How one fairly reasonable individual thought he was "unlike the others" in that he needed to get a perishable item from customs at once, needed to get ahead of the line at the licensing department because he has a ton of

work to do, needed to pay off a cop to let an errand child off the hook. That must have happened soon after the war. I did read somewhere that before World War II, the Philippine civil service was reasonably honest and the Philippine Constabulary was fairly efficient. Look where they are now.

Weeds have a way of becoming a thicket, wrong practices have a way of becoming a culture. I am writing this in America, and as people have been reminding me over the past several days, Filipinos here are honest, hardworking and disciplined. So obviously the dishonesty, inefficiency and lawlessness have nothing to do with genes, or mental disposition, they have to do with manmade, or Filipino-made, situations at home. Here, where laws are applied fairly universally, or at least where Filipinos are in no position to be the exception, Filipinos get to show exemplary behavior and as a result get on very well in life.

Of course, I also remember something an Arab friend told me, which is that traffic cops in Jeddah now tend to accept bribes from erring drivers, a practice that seems to have been started there by Filipinos. But that is another story.

The trick, I suppose, lies in nipping the wrong things at the bud. Or in starting the right things at the lowest level. You may not like Lee Kuan Yew, but you've got to admire at least the way he has instilled, or enforced, discipline among Singaporeans. The first time I was in Singapore, in the 1970s, I was impressed with the way an airport official ran after me to say I had left something in the counter. I was even more impressed when I tried to hire a taxi that was disgorging its passenger and was told to take the one at the head of a line opposite the airport exit. Those things too have a way of spawning culture, faster than frogs spawn tadpoles.

Once the wrong practice kicks in, it's all you can do to stop it. I've been at my wits' end over the past several months trying to figure out a way to discourage people parking in front of me at night in our parking lot. Deflating tires and making a dent on the sides of offending vehicles—which I have done in broad daylight in plain view of people—do not seem to do the trick. They probably think I'm just being fashionably crazy. I'll have to dream up more imaginative mischief.

And that's just over parking. Can you imagine how it is with official corruption?

Rethink ROTC abolition

THE TWO-YEAR Reserve Officers Training Course (ROTC) is under fire from certain quarters who allege that it has become irrelevant and open to corruption. For as long as I can remember the ROTC has been around, but in the old days few questioned its "relevance." It was thought of then as good for the young people's discipline and character formation. I submit that this argument remains relevant in these times: the people of this generation, admittedly softer in many ways than their parents, could certainly use continuing lessons in discipline and character formation.

Regarding corruption, abolishing the program would not provide the answer. Tackling corruption head-on would. As for the time devoted to ROTC training, which is usually every Sunday, being put to better use, that is entirely debatable. Would it mean more time for "maling"?

Army Chief Lt. Gen. Jaime de los Santos recently objected to the ROTC's abolition on the ground that the program enables the AFP to fill up the dwindling ranks of officers. He pointed out that the Philippine Military Academy does not turn out enough graduates to fill the officer corps. This year, for instance, the Army needs about 1,500 officers, but it will be short of 903 officers. The ROTC has over the generations proudly supplied many leaders for the AFP and the police who have performed competently with the Peemeyers.

De los Santos also cited the ROTC cadre's indispensable role in such endeavors as disaster management, search and rescue operations and election security. Without this reserve pool of officer candidates, the AFP would be even more impoverished than it already is. Let us rethink this move to abolish the ROTC as it involves the way of life of a nation. What needs to be done is to improve the ROTC training and correct its infirmities.

During the TV "debate" featuring the aspirants for the House speakership, sponsored by the Council on Public Affairs, Msgr. Nico Baulistan asked why some unsavory characters get elected to Congress. For instance, a convicted rapist was just reelected to his third House term while another one has a pending extradition case. The candidates for speaker pointed out that these House members either have not received final conviction or have pending cases, and so Congress has no choice but to honor and respect the people's decision to elect them. The fault lies in the poor politi-

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



cal education of the electorate and in the slow pace of the administration of justice here. For instance, that rapist-lawmaker was convicted during his first term, but from the looks of it, he would probably finish his third term before the Supreme Court rules with finality on his appeal.

But now Sen. Rene Cayetano has a bright idea. He is filing a bill that would bar from running for public office anyone convicted even by the lower court of a heinous crime or a crime against morality. Cayetano's bill will no longer wait for final conviction. This is good as this would prevent the anomalous situation, but it is also an indictment of the panging pace of the justice system.

Every Sunday evening at 9:15, I join Cecile Alvarez on dzRH to look at citizens' efforts to help alleviate poverty. Last Sunday we featured Wilhelmina Martinez, administrator of Erda Technical-Vocational High School in Pandacan, Manila. Martinez spoke of Erda Tech's nearly 500 students from first year to fifth year, who are drawn from the poorest families in Metro Manila and trained in various skills under the dual-tech system while on full or partial scholarship. Erda Tech was set up by the Jesuit educator, Fr. Pierre Tritz in 1994, 20 years since he founded the mother organization, Erda Foundation, which currently provide about 18,000 students all over the country from grade one to sixth with their school needs to prevent them from dropping out.

In the early 1990s, Father Tritz, now 86, who realized that the only way to break the cycle of poverty is to give poor children technical training, also saw the need for a large pool of technically trained youths if this country was to industrialize.

As Martinez narrated it, this direct relationship between training and poverty is illustrated in the life of Nicasio "Junior" Sierra, who graduated from Erda Tech's electrical course last April. Junior, 20, comes from a family of 14 children, the son of barangay tanod

Nicasio Sr., who earns P300 a month in his job, and Aling Felicidad, who runs a tiny *sari-sari* store selling junk food by Erda's gate. Their hovel in Morales Compound in Pandacan is the size of a family van so that the children cannot all sleep there at the same time. Some kids have to spend the night in mini-buses parked in front of Erda's gate.

The athletic Junior is the first in his family to earn a high-school diploma, thanks to Erda Tech. But what's remarkable about this family is that through their poverty they have remained happy, prayerful and focused on fixing this problem. The investment in this boy was well worth it as he is very talented: he won first prize in the First Manila District Skills Competition in Commercial Wiring in September 2000 and was a participant in the 9th Metro Manila Skills Olympics at the World Trade Center last November. After graduation he began working as an electrical aide at a construction firm, Design Base, ignoring enticements for higher training because his family needs the income badly.

There are many such kids at Erda Tech who are talented but they badly need help in order to have a brighter future. If you want to help alleviate poverty, sponsor any one of 84 first-year students who have no sponsors yet. (It only costs P15,000 per student.) Call Wilhelmina Martinez or school principal Estelita Marzan at 521-3547, 564-2608 or 564-1857.

Chola Navarro of Performing Artists International (PAI), who never tires of looking for ways to give local singers the opportunity to hone their talents, wishes to invite those who are looking for a respite from all our problems to get lost in beautiful music. This Thursday, July 5, at 9 p.m. at the Alegria Lounge at the Holiday Inn, along UN Avenue in Manila, PAI will present a special adaptation of "South Pacific," the Rodgers & Hammerstein musical, which she says "integrates the musical with the current blockbuster 'Pearl Harbor'." Sponsored by Pageant, the show features as special guest Asian pop diva Dula, who will sing the haunting "Bali Ha'i." The young Lia will be played by Academy One ballerina Pamela Mendoza, and her match-making mother, Bloody Mary, will be portrayed by Angie Magpantla. Playing the handsome Lt. Joe Cable is rising star Lance Raymond, while veteran actor Chingay Alonzo, the stage director, is cast as the suave Frenchman Emile De Becque. Navarro is artistic director and script-writer.

A time for triumph

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



grams on the issue, launching campaigns over the radio and TV, in print and even advertising. Regular campus tours also serve to bring the issue to the awareness of young men and women. It was also Kalakasan, with the support of them QC Vice Mayor Chario Planas that spearheaded the establishment of women's desks in police precincts in the city, and eventually, with the support of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, all over the country.

At the anniversary celebration, Kalakasan unveiled another form of collaboration, this time with artists in the "Artists and Activists" program. The initial output of the program is a unique and quite moving piece, "Payatas," that combines dance and video to make statements about poverty, violence, hypocrisy and despair.

A collaboration among dance artist Myra Beltran, dancer-videographer Nomoy Froilan and director Carillos Siguan Reyna, "Payatas" is truly gut-wrenching, or as St. Mary John Manzanan remarked while we watched it unfold, "nakaka-sakit ng sikmuna."

I do hope "Payatas" finds a wider audience. If only because a major character, a young boy through whose eyes much of the events are viewed, is played by Carillos' and his wife Bibeth Ortega's own son. With his expressive eyes and physicality, he gives signs of someday growing into an artist-performer in his own right.

DURING the tribute that we, her sisters in Pilipina and other women's groups, organized for Caroline "Lyn-Lyn" Matamnu Lampaoag, her mentor and first boss, Ging Quintos Deles, recounted a story told her by Lyn-Lyn's husband Rald.

During the Christmas break, when Lyn-Lyn came home from her Jakarta posting for Unesco, she, Rald and their two children took part in a ritual that had become part of their small family's tradition. Each member of the family expressed a "dream" that he or she wished to be fulfilled in the year to come. Lyn-Lyn's dream was that they would all have the chance to spend time together as a family. Since she had been apart from them for some months.

For their summer break this year, Rald and the children flew to Jakarta and there spent a month with Lyn-Lyn, visiting various tourist spots in Indonesia. It was while they were enjoying themselves in a beach resort not far from Jakarta that Lay, the older child, observed to her mother: "Inay, wasn't this your dream, that we would all be together as a family, enjoying ourselves?"

To which Lyn-Lyn replied: "Yes, that was my dream, and now it's come true. That's why it's important to dream, because every triumph begins with a dream."

Our short and hastily prepared program for Lyn-Lyn interspersed recollections from her colleagues and sisters with songs by Bayang Barrios, Ateli Marcelino (a gender and development trainer who sang her own composition), and Inang Laya. We were especially grateful for the presence of Karina Constantino David and Becky Demetillo Abraham, in a rare reunion since they consider themselves semi-retired from performing.

From everything that was said of Lyn-Lyn not just during the sisterhood's tribute but also the tributes organized by her friends in social development and her classmates at the Ateneo, it seems clear that Lyn-Lyn lived her life by the light of a central dream. And that was no less than the dream of a society truly free and truly equal.

I have written previously that we considered Lyn-Lyn a "child" of Pilipina. More than that, she was a child of her times and of the society that emerged from the darkness of martial law, living out the injunctions on justice and equality that propelled her to commit to the life she chose. And it is with the painful realization that this young woman was coming into her own, and in her marriage with Rald, shaping two wonderful human beings, that we most mourn her loss and feel her absence.

Cultural influences

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



conferred prestige upon the owners. The Chinese might not even have considered these types as works of art, differentiating between "export wares" and their imperial wares as well as certain designs specifically for the European market such as the blue and white willow pattern.

These enthusiastic consumers were not just continental Europeans but Spanish settlers who had made their money in mining or commerce, government functionaries and Church dignitaries who considered these products to be symbols of prestige and power.

The clientele of Oriental products weren't confined to the wealthy since they found acceptance with a bigger market. Silk bought in Manila, embroidered or otherwise, had different categories, some of them priced within reach of the masses. Europe had its silk but it could not compete with the brilliance (or price) of the Chinese products. (Doesn't this sound all too familiar?)

Aside from textile, there were also porcelain, furnishings like screens, paintings and embroideries on silk that were manufactured and geared to a foreign market. Whole sets of tableware were ordered for special occasions such as the ascension of Charles IV to the throne. Today porcelain pieces can still be found bearing scenes of European life in Asia.

Silk embroidered in gold or silver thread was also ordered for religious statues or for use in religious vestments. Ivory products were commissioned and made under the direction of Spanish friars. Hard wood furniture was ordered deco-

rated with mother of pearl, ivory and silver, whether in the form of tables, chairs, boxes, benches, armchairs or screens.

The variety of these objects of art is for the most part seen today in museums, private residences and antique galleries. In recent years, quite a number have been salvaged through underwater archaeology, and the National Museum has impressive galleries devoted to these treasures.

For instance, the galleon San Diego, which sank during the encounter with the Dutch on Dec. 14, 1600, had 5,262 objects that have since been restored in Manila and Paris. From instruments of navigation like the astrolabe to bronze cannons forged perhaps by Panday Pira, 200 pieces of export blue and white porcelain, silver objects, items used in everyday life—these are mute testimony to that transpacific trade.

We owe Spain whatever vestiges may be left of an urban tradition. (The word "urban" means relating to or characteristic of or constituting a city, while to describe a person as "urbane" is to say he is courteous, polite and polished. Needless to say, I'm thinking of the Mehan Gardens and those restaurants atop the Intramuros walls.) The urban tradition, i.e., the concept of how a population is to be organized into a community, was implanted by Spain (probably more specifically by Spanish friars). As a Mediterranean country, Spain had a long history of urban life as well as the experience of establishing cities in the New World. Intramuros shares with Latin American countries the grid pattern with streets parallel and perpendicular, a square major plaza, a plaza de armas, the fort, the bastions, the posters, the storage for ammunition, the royal house, the hermitages, the *cabildo*, the cathedral, the monasteries.

Whatever the Americans might have thought by the time they arrived, we had been urbanized for 300 years, a tradition that appears to be on the wane today.

Coming of age

(Concluded from Saturday)

15. RECOGNIZE the substance of your rage. Rage without respect for other voices gets you nowhere.

Balance your passion and criticism. Stick to the objective and don't be afraid to take leave when the greater good is absent from a cause.

16. Respect women. Respect nature. Respect old folks. Respect others' opinions. Respect yourself. Without looking at other side of truth, you're really just talking to yourself, making others talk behind your back. It's a democracy out there. Respect other things and other peoples' places in the sun. They are pieces of you.

17. Seize the day! Not tomorrow, but now. If it's within your control, leave nothing to chance. Take the rein; grab opportunities. There is so much more to say but the important thing is for you to go on the journey and discover things for yourself.

Every fall is worth the ride, but do count the great strides, and have fun! Remember: Suck the very marrow out of life.

18. Embrace your weaknesses. Heal your bruises. Recover, recover, recover. Everybody hurts. Everyone faces storms in his life. But what counts most is that you get back up and face new challenges.

19. Dream. Otherwise life is not worth living. Imagination is more important, more lasting than knowledge. Albert Einstein knew that. The best form of freedom is when you can get out of the boundaries of your mind. Break the barriers of your soul's poverty. Soar above the crowd and take yourself beyond its visions.

20. Believe. In God. Angels. Life. Love. Friendship. Family. Success. Beauty. They're what makes this life worth living, and they make the less palatable aspects of our lives more digestible.

21. Life is beautiful, no matter what you did or what others have done to you. Amid the darkest news, the bleakest events, there's the awesome miracle of living. And while you live, try your best to act with courage, contentment and wisdom. You've heard it before: You need the first to change the things you can, the second to accept the things you can't, and the third to know the difference.

22. Be a little bit of everything. But keep your character. A warrior who wears only one armor leaves some parts vulnerable. Never be afraid to be different. Find your individuality and keep it evolving. Diversity makes this world interesting.

23. Never stop learning or miss an opportunity to learn. Plant a tree. Write a book. Contribute a verse. Learn to play an instrument. Sing. Dance. Cook. You only have this one chance. Don't waste it.

24. Seek your motivation. First you crawl until you're strong enough to stand on your own feet. Use your hands, feet and other sources of strength and be amazed by your own capacity to make it through. Your failures or shortcomings are your first source of wisdom.

25. Perfection and happiness are for real. The happiest people don't have everything; they're just good at making the best of everything that life brings. Don't search too far for the perfect time, the perfect person or the perfect word. The laughter and the tears you've shared, the wisdom you've acquired, the constancy of life and the fact that you are part of it make every moment perfect.

26. Earn respect and freedom. Guard them with your life. History teaches us that freedom is never given and respect isn't handed out for free. One must fight for them and when he has them he must exercise eternal vigilance to keep them. And then he has to ask himself what he is going to do with them.

27. True genius lies in achieving more with less. At work, do things the smart way: maximize the use of available resources, delegate tasks, set realistic deadlines. Why should you live your life differently? Making things a lot simpler often involves nothing more than the use of common sense.

28. People go on forever when somebody takes them along. We achieve tangible mortality by enjoying every moment with our loved ones. In their hearts, we live on as undying memories told from one generation to the next.

29. Above all, be true to yourself. Express, do not impress. The best words and the most wonderful stories are those that we can take with us without fear, guilt or watching ourselves lest we accidentally slip into inconsistency. Which is really a lie.

30. Anger has no purpose. You probably don't have to turn the other cheek when you are treated unfairly, but to show anger is only to display one's weakness unnecessarily. That only excites the offender for then he has achieved his or her purpose. Get even by not getting mad.

31. Greed eventually destroys what it accumulates. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. A cheap squirt of authority may embolden a person but it also gradually degrades one's humanity if left to rule on its own. Power is essential to rule or to lead, but unguided by a good motivation or an honest heart, it becomes a ticking bomb that will destroy its bearer eventually.

32. Ignorance or apathy does not make one less culpable, but more accountable. In this world, it's so easy to commit a crime: just do nothing, say nothing, be nothing. Cowardice in the midst of chaos reduces our capability to realize our full potential. It damages us permanently until we do something about it. On a larger scale, it turns ineptness and injustice into truths that people live by.

33. Never cry wolf. It takes only one discovered lie to soil one's reputation. If you truly have to lie, make it simple, easy to remember and consistent. But if you alarm people dishonestly or mischievously, prepare to pay the price. When the true moment comes, nobody will believe you anymore.

34. Seek truth from within. Not from newspaper, television or radio reports that tend to magnify crises. Just as they sometimes make things look larger than life, so do they conjure visions worse than death. But don't be too blind to notice the scars, the real enemies, the cry for help. Truth lies in your heart. Listen to what it tells you.

35. Act serious and people will take you seriously. Act dumb and you'll be treated the same way. People listen to leaders who carry a big stick.

36. Prejudice is ignorance is slavery. Woman and homosexuals have been prejudged for their gender, African-Americans and other "colored" people for their skin. We've built "caste" systems to alienate, and other proselytizing systems to segregate "our" kind from the "others."

37. Stop counting and start living. You can't account for the appetite, the good night sleep, the wild ride, the times spent together, the living years, the sensibility and common sense we gain from real experiences. These are priceless. Save, yes, but not to the point of postponing what you can enjoy now.

38. Real poverty is in the soul. Amputate the soul and you kill the man. A nation can suffer the most severe economic and political crises, but the most tragic one is when its people lose all hope while its leaders want only to enrich themselves at the peoples' expense.

39. Just because you don't see something, it doesn't mean it's not there. Even if it's there, we may fail to see. A rock in a fountain of water, so goes a line in "The Godfather," remains hard and solid inside, as impenetrable as some residents of the Vatican who fail to see God even if they're surrounded by His images.

We're not any different. But it's part of our life's journey to either seek our God or to stay callous and cold as stone.

40. Don't be afraid to take big steps, you cannot cross a chasm in two small jumps. Remember there is nothing to fear but fear itself. The worst form of death is the one you live with inside of you amid the flow of hope that accompanies each passing day. Live with honor and without regret.

Dennis Torrecampo 28, works as a content manager for a leading global e-business consultancy firm in Singapore.

Notice to Youngblood contributors

Contributors to Youngblood who haven't received their checks are requested to inquire with the PDI cashier on Friday.

Erap trial a matter of public concern

THE SUPREME Court decision not to allow television coverage of the trial of former President Joseph Estrada comes as a big disappointment.

The Court ruled that "a public trial is not synonymous with a publicized trial"—which tends to confuse "public" with "publicity" if only to vaguely rationalize barring the use of the existing technology of television.

Owing to the fact that the trial has no precedent in the history of litigation in the country, the Court ought to have been more circumspect in deciding the matter and should not have resorted to semantics as an easy way out.

The trial of a president is a matter of public concern. To cover it live on television is to make available information that is a matter of public concern to all those who are in-

terested using existing technology.

Television is as public as one can get in this time and age. If a public trial is held, then it follows that television can cover it live.

Now what is a "publicized trial"? Is it a reference to a television network's effort to maximize its viewership rating? If this is so, then the Court should merely direct the networks not to "publicize" or run station ads to announce the coverage of the trial.

It was not necessary for the Court to make a distinction between a public trial and a publicized trial because one certainly has nothing to do with the other except perhaps in addressing the same audience: the Filipino public.

Is it necessary then to point out to the justices of the Supreme Court that Filipino citizens are the aggrieved party in this case against the

former president and that therefore they should be as much a part of the proceedings? The people need to know whether the former president is guilty or not guilty of the charges against him. And this need to know the truth can be the only argument for television coverage.

Is the Supreme Court decision not adding insult to the injury (of the alleged crime against the people) that the former president has already inflicted upon the Constitution of the land? And being the aggrieved party here, is the ruling not another cause for grievance at being deprived of the experience of standing witness to this moment in Philippine judicial history?

It is only proper for the Kapitan ng mga Brodkastrer sa Pilipinas (KBP) to file an appeal for reconsideration, in the hope that the decision will be overturned.



Indeed, we should all express disapproval of this ruling that tends to limit access to information that is of great interest to the public.

Interestingly, in its desire to discourage mass action, the Court is courting public unrest—directed at the institution—with this kind of decision. And the justices can rest assured that any street action of that kind will be covered by television.—FRANCISCO LEO LOPEZ, 2118 M.H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila

RP coffee industry needs a break

COFFEE is about the latest thing to hit our colonial minded society. Although the Philippine coffee industry has been dying a slow and painful death ever since the Americans brought in coffee beans from Brazil and Colombia, the *elitista* have spearheaded the entry of expensive coffee places like Starbucks.

Starbucks coffee is good and steeply priced. It sure does repress the Filipino's taste for good old Batangas *barako* and other local varieties. It's either instant coffee or the expensive coffee shop kind for us Filipinos.

The government in its move toward globalization upon the prodding of First World nations hastened the entry of foreign coffee shops like Starbucks, Coffee California and Seattle's Best in the late 1990s. What the government has forgotten to do is encourage the growth of the local coffee industry.

Philippine coffee consists of four varieties (Arabica is the best of all). It is sad to see our once thriving coffee industry dying beside the expensive imported varieties that dominate our market.

Sure the Philippines has been dubbed a "houseboy country" by critics on account of our penchant for anything foreign. It has come to the point that we forget to nurture our very own, including the simplest things like coffee.

I've been sitting in Starbucks coffee shops for three years now ever since the first outlet in Makati opened to the detriment of my allowance. Starbucks gives you the feeling that you're in the States. It also gives you a taste of sophisticated coffee drinks like macchiato, latte and the like. Its clientele isn't exactly your average Filipino waiting to catch a jeepney or bus ride. The fact is Starbucks caters to the AB market.

But hey, there's not too much harm in drinking Starbucks coffee. Let's just not forget to remind the government to ease up a bit on the globalization thing. Our coffee should emerge victorious in the Philippines if not the international market. Let's face the fact that our coffee industry needs a big break and patronizing coffee shops that sell foreign coffee is detrimental to our national interest.

In this sense coffee reflects the political and social abyss that we Filipinos must fathom. It reflects many things in our society, like the ineffectiveness of our government and our colonial mindset, that have brought our country down to its knees in the past and in the present.—RINA T. LIM, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman

Roco not 'spoiling' public school teachers

THIS is a reaction to the Federation of Association of Private School Administrators' lament that Education Secretary Raul Roco is "spoiling public school teachers." (PDI, 6/19/01)

Fapsa president, Eleazar Kasilag expressed grief over Secretary Roco's actions "in appeasing the perennially complaining public schoolteachers to the point of hastening the death of private educational institutions."

I see nothing wrong if public schoolteachers, who for so long have been receiving wages that cannot dignify their existence or their profession, would be perennially complaining. I see nothing wrong in Secretary Roco doing justice to public schoolteachers. That was not appeasing, it was honoring, recog-

Even the dogs know

"BOUNDED on the N., points 3 to 4 by Lot 2, Block 5, on the E., points 1 to 2 by Lot 6, Block 5..." The description goes on and on, defining the boundaries of a piece of land that a *ningang* passed on to me many years ago. I've paid the taxes on it each year at the Caloocan City Hall but I've never seen the property itself for the simple reason that no one can find it, not even people from the City Hall. I suspect that if I ever find that piece of property, it would have been taken over by squatters, or that it has been sold to someone else in a fraudulent deal.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan



The problem isn't just with land titles. An American friend bought a condominium several years back, or thought he bought one. It was a scam and the case is still in the courts.

I thought of all these problems as I read a book, "The Mystery of Capital," by Hernando De Soto, which included case studies conducted in Egypt, Mexico, Haiti and the Philippines. De Soto's thesis is simple: Western countries developed capitalism around property rights. When people are able to acquire their own land and homes, and a legal system is in place to recognize and safeguard that ownership, then property can be used as collateral to borrow money from banks and to invest this in businesses. All that becomes a major force for capital to grow.

In countries like the Philippines, only large landowners are assured of their property rights. Everyone else is left hanging. The poor can't afford to buy land or a home in the first place so they end up squatting. The middle class is only a bit more fortunate, paying exorbitant prices for substandard housing. But rich or poor, everyone is so very vulnerable to anomalies and frauds when it comes to land titles and home ownership documents.

De Soto writes extensively about the phenomenon of squatting, which is common to many Third World countries. But he points out that even in the United States, there were squatters up to the 19th century. What the government did was to find ways of helping the squatters legalize their land ownership.

That's different from our urban politicians' squatter coddling. Our politicians curry votes from the slums through a patronage system, offering "protection" for squatter communities but without ever resolving the question of ownership. But then politicians aren't interested in giving the squatters their own land and homes. What they want is to keep the squatters in limbo, without titles, so that they will be perpetually dependent.

De Soto's researchers found that in the Philippines, someone who has been squatting on public or private land could try to purchase the land. But the squatter would need to form an association with other illegal occupants and to apply from a state housing finance program for funding support. The process entails 168 bureaucratic steps and dealing with 53 public and private agencies, all of which could consume 13 to 25 years. If the land in question is considered "agricultural," it would have to be reclassified as "land for urban use." That involves another 45 bureaucratic procedures that will take two more years.

Without connections, the squatters' applications languish, and with so many steps and agencies involved, the chances for graft and corruption shoot up without any guarantees that the applicants will ever complete the process. The system just does not encourage legal home ownership.

It's encouraging to hear housing "czar" Michael Defensor announcing reforms in this area, including a reduction of bureaucratic hurdles for housing projects. In May, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed executive orders reclassifying more than 2,000 hectares of government land in Manila into housing sites, opening the way for squatters who have been there the last 40 or 50 years to legalize their land occupancy.

Instead of focusing on the First Couple's one-shot doleout activities, the media should feature initiatives with long-term effects, such as the reforms in housing. With some three million Filipino families not owning their homes, the Macapagal administration has an opportunity to make a lasting difference. Land and homes are passed on to the next generation, so politicians who help make this ownership a reality will be remembered for many years.

To go back to my main point, a sound housing project starts with cleaning up our legal infrastructure for land and homes. Unless we do this, we will see a lot more disputes and court litigation. De Soto offers this advice: Listen to the barking dogs. He notes that even in the most congested slums, you can tell from the dogs' barking where a household begins and ends. At least the dogs have it all figured out. Maybe my *ningang*'s property is actually in Quezon City?

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.org

What happened to story on Irene's deposit?

SEVERAL months ago you ran a series of articles on a bank account supposed to have been opened by Irene Marcos with Deutsche Bank in Germany allegedly to be used for some payoffs on the sharing of Marcos' ill-gotten wealth. It seems that your newspaper has grown cold on that issue and has left it hanging with the allegations and counter allegations of the characters involved (including Deutsche Bank). Nothing has really been proven.

With your publication blowing hot and cold on the issue, I sometimes wonder what your motives are. Did you really intend to get

to the bottom of this story? Or did you run it simply to boost your readership and circulation? You can only do justice to your readers if you pursue this issue to its just conclusion or at least close the issue by admitting that you've been had and you have wittingly or unwittingly allowed your paper to be used for the personal agenda of some characters.—CRIS S. CABALATUNGAN, 8 Ormoc St., Alabang Hills, Muntinlupa

Our reporter is now in Düsseldorf, Germany, following up the story.—Ed.



Red baiting on ROTC issue

IT is so amusing how the Armed Forces of the Philippines makes such sweeping but dense statements in the letter published last June 29 titled "Review of ROTC program in progress," Lt. Col. Jose Z. Mabanta carefully evaded the real issues which have led to the clamor for the abolition of the ROTC. He simply slandered legitimate and recognized student organizations by resorting to labeling, branding and Red baiting, a technique the AFP is very famous for.

The letter was in fact an attack not on what Mabanta dubbed as "leftist organizations" but on the youth who are pursuing their legitimate demands. The picket at the University of Sto.

Tomas, spearheaded by Anakbayan, the League of Filipino Students and Student Christian Movement of the Philippines, was legitimate expression of the demand of not only members of these organizations but of students and cadets as well. It is not only these student organizations that want the ROTC program abolished. Many parents and school administrations are troubled by the corruption within the program.

Does the AFP find it hard to understand that the ROTC program breeds corruption? In exposing this, Mark Chua lost his life.

Second, the program is nothing more than an added compulsory burden to our parents adding to the cost of education which is rising yearly. Third, the program molds

fascist minds among the youth.

Mabanta's appeal to parents and the academic community to keep away these student organizations from their children and students was a sappy one. The AFP speaks of a "democratic way of life" and "molding the youth into responsible, competent and learned professionals," but isn't it a monstrous human rights violation?

No amount of Red baiting can stop us in pursuing the youth's legitimate demands, and in this case, the abolition of the ROTC.—TANYA MARIA GUERRERO, national president, League of Filipino Students, 1316 San Perfecto St., Sampaloc, Manila

and I wonder if they would be willing, given the military's code of silence, to tell the whole world the real role of the military in the bombing plot of Plaza Miranda. With the recent announcement of the AFP that the CCP-NPA-NDF is still the No. 1 threat, wouldn't it be safe to conclude that such "exposés" are aimed to undermine the peace talks and prepare public opinion for its eventual scrapping?

Such an absurdity should not be seen as an aberration to the general trend. Where else in the world can a convicted rapist be elected as a congressman, or a torturer treated as a hero? And only in the Philippines can the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos be the friend and not the fiend. *Dito lang po talaga sa atin.*—RAYMOND MAGLANOC, chair, ANAKBAYAN-NCR, 1316 San Perfecto St. Sampaloc, Manila

There's hardly any trees to hold the soil down!

These people who favor turning the Mehan Gardens into another concrete jungle are not thinking. It must be all the carbon monoxide that they breathe!—JOUSIELYN C. NOSCAL, 1013 St. Rt. 307 West, Jefferson, Ohio, 44047 USA

against our race and culture, this is one case of "barking up the wrong tree." Reading the *Inquirer* in the Net has been a daily habit for me.—EXPEDITO MERCADO, emercado@midway.uchicago.edu

Please see the following story on Page A22.—Ed.

Whitewash of Marcos' abuses

THE RECENT revelation of former Senate President Jovito Salonga about who he thinks was the real mastermind of the Plaza Miranda bombing is nothing less than disturbing. According to Salonga's theory, the bombing of the Liberal Party meeting was masterminded by Jose Maria Sison and not Ferdinand Marcos. Sison allegedly plotted and executed the plan to intensify the hatred for the Marcoses, thereby providing the masses more reason to join the ranks of the revolutionaries.

Wittingly or unwittingly, Salonga, by playing the apologist for the Marcoses, rubbed salt on the wounds of the more than 10,000 human rights victims who still have to see justice served. This is the reason nobody was surprised that the Marcos family was the first to applaud the book of Salonga.

If we were to believe such "unraveling of the truth," then we become a party to the whitewashing of the gross human rights violations of the Marcos regime. And if such "corrections" of history continues, we shouldn't be surprised if the next revelation would be that it was not the Marcoses who plotted to kill Ninoy Aquino but Sison or some other person. To stretch the argument further, it was probably Sison who gave Estrada his drinking and gambling habit so that the people will hate his governance. What absurdity!

Another point I would like to add is the biases of the witnesses whose testimony Salonga cites. All the names he mentioned are either non-living or are working for the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Victor Corpuz and Ruben Guevarra serve as intelligence agents of the government,

Poisoned by Manila's polluted air

WONDER what ever happened to the way some Filipinos in Manila think? Convert a mini jungle into a concrete jungle? These people are the same ones affected by pollution caused by people and machines. Don't they realize that the trees help clean the air they breathe? Are sentimentality and respect for cultural heritage gone?

My heart cried the first time I saw mountains being quarried for building supplies and to reclaim the seashores. I rebelled against my own relatives when I saw that my Nanay's share of the family property was hacked for coco lumber and the coconut trees were never replaced. And people wondered why little rain cause so much flooding?

Barking up the wrong tree

LEAH Salterio should have at least checked the veracity of Art Bell having allegedly insulted the Filipinos. I am a regular listener of Bell's radio program, Coast to Coast and, time and time again, he has denied the accusations. His letter to the Filipino people is posted on his website, www.artbell.com.

The alleged insult attributed to Art Bell was traced to a university in California. Apparently, there was rivalry between ethnic Asian groups in that school and somebody circulated that offensive letter in the Web.

While I agree that we should always protest and take offense when derogatory accusations are made

The WORLD

Luverne B. Gueco, Editor

Milosevic: Trial a Nato revenge

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia—Slobodan Milosevic will tell the UN war crimes tribunal Tuesday that he is being put on show trial as a victim of Nato revenge because he refused to give up Kosovo, his lawyers said.

Milosevic was extradited Thursday to The Hague, Netherlands, to be tried by the tribunal on alleged involvement in Kosovo atrocities during the crackdown he ordered in 1998 on the Serbian province's

ethnic Albanian majority. He was to appear Tuesday for an initial hearing.

Milosevic had been awaiting trial for alleged corruption and abuse of power in a Belgrade prison, and domestic investigations had recently widened to his alleged links to covering up Kosovo atrocities. Although he was extradited before any domestic trial, his lawyers claimed Sunday that they had proven their client's innocence and the same defense team would be representing him at The Hague.

The lawyers said Milosevic was in good health despite the ordeal of extradition.

Asked about strategy, lawyer Branimir Gugi said: "We have not been working on the defense... (because) Mr. Milosevic does not recognize the tribunal."

Gugi said his client continues to assert that his is "clearly a political trial, based on the fact that he is the only man who stood up against Nato."

Milosevic's refusal to pull out his forces from Kosovo despite a Nato ultimatum provoked 78 days of

bombing by the alliance, stopped only in mid-June after he gave in and ordered his troops out of the province, permitting UN administrators and Nato-led peacekeepers in.

Reflecting the trademark defiance Milosevic has exhibited throughout his battle to avoid extradition, Gugi said the former president told his wife, Mirjana Markovic, in a phone call from The Hague that he had no regrets.

"He was working for the interests of the Serbian people as president, and if he were to be head of

state again, he would act the same way," Gugi said. Milosevic is Serb and Serbia is the larger and far more powerful of the two remaining Yugoslav republics.

"He is in fantastic psychological condition," Gugi said of Milosevic, citing his wife. "He says he is not guilty of anything."

Gugi said Milosevic requested "books, fresh clothes and money," during the phone call.

Milosevic was handed over to the tribunal by the Serbian government, in defiance of a Constitutional Court ruling that suspended a federal govern-

ment decree allowing his extradition.

Calling the handover a "turning point," the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, said Friday that the Kosovo indictment against the former Yugoslav president would be expanded.

Del Ponte said the new indictment would accuse Milosevic of responsibility in the deaths of more than 600 Kosovo Albanians, twice the number of names cited when he was first charged in May 1999.

An estimated 10,000 Kosovo Albanians were killed during Milosevic's 18-month crackdown against the rebellious Serbian province. **AP**

Drama set in a small, bare court

BY ROBERT H. REID

THE HAGUE—The opening chapter in the trial of Slobodan Milosevic will be played out in a compact chamber, where computer terminals and surveillance cameras will help justices weigh evidence of medieval brutality.

On Tuesday, the former Yugoslav president will be led into the chamber to a blue swivel chair, located in front of an inter-

preter's booth which is located to the right-front of the table where the presiding judge, Richard May of Britain, sits.

The man who wielded nearly absolute authority in Yugoslavia for more than a decade must stand when the judge enters the chamber and again when he is asked to enter his plea to each of four charges:

- Deportation, a crime against humanity;
- Murder, a crime against humanity;

• Murder, a violation of the laws or customs of war;

• And persecutions on political, racial and religious grounds, a crime against humanity.

All four charges are based on atrocities committed by his forces during a crackdown on ethnic Albanians in Kosovo two years ago. The court must decide whether Milosevic bears responsibility for those atrocities. **AP**

Wahid urges early polls to end crisis

JAKARTA—President Abdurrahman Wahid yesterday urged early general elections as the only way out of Indonesia's political stalemate, accusing opponents of blocking all avenues to compromise.

"If we still want to see this country united, the constitutional deadlock has to be overcome," an angry Wahid said at his office.

"The solution can only be through an advanced general elections," he said. "The people should judge, we should return to the people."

General elections are not due until 2004, and Wahid, who has floated the idea before, would need the approval of the country's national assembly, the MPR, to call them.

"All people said there should be no (state of) emergency, but all are closing off the path toward compromise... What do they all want?" said Wahid, addressing participants of a course held by the National Resilience Institute for district and municipal officials.

Wahid was referring to his widely opposed plan to impose a state of emergency, which would enable him to freeze parliament before it can impeach him during a special MPR session on Aug. 1.

The plan has been opposed by the military, the police, MPs and many politicians.

Wahid reiterated that efforts to oust him through the special session would trigger the disintegration of the nation and he reserved particular wrath for House Speaker Akbar Tanjung.

MPs both at the MPR, the upper house of parliament, and at the DPR, the lower house, have however already objected to bringing forward the general elections for a second time.

Indonesia brought forward the 2003 general elections to 1999, which led to the election by the MPR of Wahid as the president and Megawati Sukarnoputri as vice president.

Wahid's close aide, Defense Minister Muhammad Mahfud, said an early general election could be "a solution to the current debacle" between Wahid and legislators.

"That is because both the DPR and the president consider (their actions) as constitutional," Mahfud said, adding the MPR should play fair.

"If they want to revoke the power of the president, they should also accept to consider advancing the general elections." **AFP**

Taiwan offers official talks with China

TAIPEI—Taiwan, frustrated with a two-year impasse in relations with rival China, has offered to hold talks with Beijing through official channels, local media reported yesterday.

The proposal is unlikely to go down well in Beijing, however, since China has largely ignored the government of President Chen Shui-bian and his pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

Taiwan newspapers quoted Cabinet Secretary General Chiou I-jen as saying the government did not exclude letting the top China policymaking agency, the Mainland Affairs Council, hold talks with the Taiwan Affairs Office of China's State Council.

"If the other side is willing, we do not rule out the possibility of allowing the Mainland Affairs Council to deal directly with the mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office," the mass circulation China Times newspaper quoted Chiou as telling reporters on Sunday.

Taipei and Beijing, rivals since a 1949 civil war split, began bilateral negotiations through quasi-official bodies in the early 1990s, but talks were frozen in mid-1999 when then President Lee Teng-hui demanded parity.

Beijing views the island as a breakaway province and has threatened to attack if it declares independence or drugs its feet on unification talks.

President Chen has mellowed his pro-independence stance and offered olive branches since he swept to power last year. But he refuses to kowtow to Beijing's cherished "one China" principle that it is the sole, legitimate government of all China. **Reuters**

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Argentina's 'Blond Angel' surrenders

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—One of the most infamous death squad leaders of Argentina's 1976-1983 "Dirty War" dictatorship, Alfredo Astiz, turned himself in to police early yesterday after an Italian court sought his arrest.

The former Navy captain, known as "The Blond Angel" for his charismatic looks, was ordered detained by an Argentine judge at the request of an Italian court which linked Astiz to the 1976 kidnappings of Angela Maria Asela and the 1977 kidnapping of Giovanni Pegoraro and his pregnant daughter, Susana Pegoraro.

"He turned himself in to Interpol and now he's at (federal) police headquarters accompanied by a lawyer waiting the judge's instructions," a federal police spokesperson said.

Astiz was transferred to a Coast Guard detention cell at 2 a.m. awaiting a court hearing, the spokesperson added but could not say whether this might lead to his extradition.

There is evidence that Susana Pegoraro gave birth to a daughter, who is living under the name Evelyn Vazquez in the port city of Mar del Plata some 400 km south of Buenos Aires, Clarin and La Nacion newspapers said on Sunday.

During Argentina's dictatorship, pregnant women detained by the military were often killed after giving birth and their babies stolen to be raised by military families.

Also dubbed the "Angel of Death," Astiz once boasted to Argentine magazine *Trespuntos* in 1998, in what he claimed was an off-the-record talk, that he was "the best-trained man in Argentina to kill journalists and politicians."



THE SON of slain Palestinian Hamas member Mahmoud Khalil holds a gun during a Hamas demonstration in the West Bank city of Jenin July 1. Five Palestinian militants were killed by Israeli forces Sunday, three in a helicopter attack and two in a clash with soldiers, Israeli and Palestinian officials said.

Israel jets attack Syrian radar station

SARIN TAHTA, Lebanon—Israeli warplanes attacked a Syrian military radar station in Lebanon on Sunday in the second such strike in three months. The attack wounded two Syrian troops and a Lebanese soldier, Lebanese security officials said.

Israel said the airstrike in the eastern Bekaa Valley retaliated for a Friday attack by Hezbollah guerrillas on its northern border.

Hezbollah quickly responded to Sunday's raid, firing rockets and mortars at Israeli military positions in disputed territory on the south Lebanon border. Israeli artillery fired back, wounding a Lebanese farmer, according to Lebanese officials.

The tit-for-tat attacks marked a sharp escalation in the border conflict, reminiscent of the worst days of Israel's 18-year occupation of south Lebanon that ended when Israel withdrew its forces in May 2000. It also raised the specter of a direct military confrontation between Syria and Israel, the Middle East's most implacable enemies.

Two Israeli fighter jets fired two missiles at the Syrian radar position in this village on the main road between the towns of Zahle and Baalbek at 11:55 a.m.

"It's been destroyed," said a Syrian soldier, armed with an AK-47 assault

rifle, as he stood guard about 200 meters from the stricken position. He would not give his name.

Journalists were not allowed to get any closer to the site, so his claim could not be verified. But smoke was rising from the target, about 200 meters off the road, and there was a black patch in the adjoining field.

Syrian troops, Lebanese soldiers and police sealed the area, which is several kilometers north of Rayak, where the Lebanese Army has a major air base.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Mahmoud Hamoud said the attack confirmed "Israel's aggressive nature" and called on the United Nations to put a stop to Israeli airstrikes. He spoke on national television.

In Cairo, Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa condemned the airstrike, saying it added "a dark image to current developments and the future."

In Washington, White House spokesperson Scott Stanzel said the United States was in touch with all sides and was urging maximum restraint.

There was no immediate comment from the Syrian government. But Syria's official news agency Sana confirmed two Syrians and a Lebanese soldier were wounded.

According to Lebanese security officials in Beirut, 53 km west of Sarin Tahta,

two Syrian soldiers were wounded in the air raid. Syrian soldiers on the scene said their comrades suffered shrapnel injuries to the arms and legs.

A Lebanese soldier was hurt while standing guard at an adjacent position, according to a worker at a nearby gas station. A Lebanese military official confirmed one Lebanese soldier was wounded.

"The strike took us by surprise," said the 32-year-old witness, Syrian worker Riyaz Hamdeh. "We could barely hear the jets when the missiles hit and smoke rose," he said.

The Sarin Tahta radar is one of many radar, tank and anti-aircraft positions that the Syrian Army maintains in Lebanon. Syria has had a force of some 25,000 troops in Lebanon since 1976.

In Jerusalem, the Israeli Cabinet issued a statement saying the radar station was attacked because Syria was responsible for a Hezbollah guerrilla raid that wounded two Israeli soldiers in the Chebaa Farms on Friday.

"This criminal activity by Hezbollah takes place under the authorization of Syria, whose Army has a presence in Lebanon," the statement said.

The Israeli Army said it "will not tolerate" Hezbollah attacks and "will take all action necessary" to protect the security of Israelis.

Police to charge US sarge for Okinawa rape

TOKYO—Police were preparing on Monday to charge a US air force sergeant in the rape of a young Japanese woman, an incident that could trigger renewed anti-US forces sentiment among local residents, domestic media said.

The local mayor plans to demand a curfew on US servicemen.

After a fourth day of questioning,

police were convinced, based on witness accounts, that the 24-year-old technical sergeant raped the woman early on Friday in a parking lot in Chatan on southern Okinawa island, Kyodo news agency quoted police sources as saying.

The man has denied committing the rape, Kyodo said.

Police would apply for an arrest

warrant as soon as they coordinate arrangements with the National Police Agency and the Foreign Ministry, Kyodo quoted the sources as saying.

On Monday morning, the police summoned the man, who is in the 353rd Special Operations Group, for questioning for a fourth straight day. He has not been officially detained.

After obtaining the arrest warrant,

police will ask the US military authorities to give their consent for the arrest, and he can then be handed over to Japanese authorities.

He has been held in US custody and is based at the huge Kadena Air Base, the biggest in Asia.

The crime occurred just hours before Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi left for the United States to

meet President George W. Bush at a getting-to-know-you summit at Camp David.

While Koizumi said the two leaders had "heart-to-heart" talks, there was little sign that Bush was ready to agree to a reduction in the 26,000 US troops to which a reluctant Okinawa has played host since World War Two.

Macedonia rebels take 4 villages

SKOPJE, Macedonia—Defying new international efforts to help reach a negotiated peace, ethnic Albanian rebels are reaching out for new territory in their four-month insurgency against the Slav dominated government.

A state radio report said Sunday the rebels took control of Oturje, Varvara, Setole and Brezno, ordering Slavic Macedonians they accuse of suppressing the ethnic Albanian minority to leave the area northwest of Tetovo.

Backing up the report, Setole resident Vase Zakovski told a reporter in Skopje that he left Setole after "three armed and masked people... told me to get out of the village."

A Human Rights Watch team met about 50 villagers leaving the towns of Setole and Oturje in a convoy, who said they had been forced to leave by armed rebels, said Peter Bouckaert, with Human Rights Watch. They said a larger group had left a day earlier.

"Certainly we are concerned that Macedonian civil ans in this area were physically threatened by the (rebels)," Bouckaert said. "One of the Macedonians told me he had had a gun pointed at him and told to leave the village yesterday."

Woman to live with scorpions

KUALA LUMPUR—A Malaysian woman has begun a deadly attempt to become the "Scorpion Queen" by staying in a glass cage with 2,000 scorpions for a month.

Malena Hassan, 24, moved into the two-by-six meter cage in a museum in the northeastern state of Kelantan on Sunday at the launch of an international reptiles exhibition.

She aims to be listed in the Malaysian Book of Records as the first woman to stay in an enclosed cage with the poisonous species.

For 30 days, Malena will eat and sleep in the cubicle with the scorpions and will be allowed to leave it for only 15 minutes daily to use the bathroom.

"It sent shivers in me to see her in the cage with the scorpions. All I can do is pray for her safety," her mother Marnum Che Muda was quoted as saying by Monday's New Straits Times.

Malena's attempt was prompted by last year's success of "Snake Woman" Fazida Mat Saad who became the first Malaysian woman to have stayed 31 days with 90 snakes in a glass cubicle.

Malaysia's "Snake King" Ali Khan Shamsudin, who trained Malena, was quoted by The Star as saying her challenge was to keep all her movements gradual as scorpions are easily startled by sudden moves.

S. Korea hunts 100 N. Korean boat people

SEOUL—South Korean police are hunting more than 100 North Koreans and ethnic Koreans from China who were smuggled into the South last week, officials said yesterday.

Police said they had detained one man, who claimed to have escaped from North Korea. The man told them 107 people were on three Chinese fishing boats that put the Koreans ashore on Friday.

News of the manhunt was released two days after a family of seven North Koreans arrived in Seoul, having spent three days holed up at a United Nations refugee agency office in Beijing demanding safe passage to South Korea.

China normally sends North Koreans that it catches back to the communist state. Aid groups say escapees are sometimes executed there.

A growing number of Koreans in China are staging desperate bids to reach refuge in South Korea.

Police said they did not know how many North Koreans had left China on three fishing boats on July 24 and reached the west coast of South Korea near Tangjin.

Kim Jae-kook of Tangjin police said the detained man had been left behind after sustaining a broken leg.

"We have launched a manhunt to arrest the rest of 107 illegal immigrants but we fear they may already be a long way inland," Kim said.

The arrested North Korean said he had escaped a Russian logging camp in 1994 and fled to China.

Police said they did not know how many North Koreans were among the wanted group.

Aid groups have said there are up to 300,000 North Koreans and ethnic Koreans in China waiting for a chance to get to the South.



READY TO SAIL AGAIN

Sydney's oldest sailing ship, the James Craig, makes its official return to service July 2 as she steams past the Sydney Harbor skyline following 30 years of restoration by hundreds of volunteers. Originally launched in 1874, the 54.7-meter-long three-masted Barque rig is undertaking working-up cruises before turning to charter work, which costs A\$13,500 (\$6,900) per day, including catering.

Sacked police chief spurns Wahid envoy post offer



BIMANTORO

JAKARTA—Indonesia's sacked national police chief General Suryono Bimantoro yesterday rejected President Abdurrahman Wahid's offer to appoint him as ambassador to Malaysia.

"I personally and my family offer a million thanks for the respect and appreciation shown by the president by offering me the post as ambassador to Malaysia," Bimantoro told a press conference.

"With all due respect, we cannot yet accept (the offer) owing to limitations on our part," he added, without elaborating.

However, Bimantoro said he now

accepted his controversial dismissal as police chief by Wahid.

"I personally accept it as a reality and it is the authority of the president to replace the chief of police," he said. Bimantoro said he had earlier refused an order by the president to submit a letter of resignation, not refused to accept the dismissal itself.

"I am well aware that because of limitations... I have not yet performed to the fullest and as expected by the national leader and the community," he said.

Bimantoro was suspended as police chief by Wahid on June 2, after he had refused the president's re-

quest the day before to resign.

Wahid revealed at the police force's 55th anniversary celebrations Sunday that he had appointed Bimantoro as Indonesia's new ambassador to Kuala Lumpur.

The near-blind Wahid is battling impeachment and the upper house is due to convene a special meeting on Aug. 1 to demand he accounts for his role. He will be impeached if lawmakers reject his account.

Bimantoro had defied his suspension and continued to act as head of police, with the vocal support of the country's top police commanders and former police chiefs.

Bimantoro and his supporters, including many parliamentarians, maintain the president cannot suspend or sack the police chief without parliament's approval.

Seven leaders of parliamentary factions criticized Wahid's offer of the ambassadorial post to Bimantoro.

"This is the third violation committed by the president," Ali Marwan Hanan, chair of the Muslim-based United Development Party faction in parliament, said on television.

He was referring to Wahid's two earlier decisions to fire Bimantoro's predecessor Rusdiharjo and to decommission Bimantoro.

US-Vietnam talks on Agent Orange make shaky start

BY STEVE KIRBY

HANOI—Washington and Hanoi yesterday resumed troubled talks on joint research into the impact of the wartime defoliant Agent Orange amid accusations by a US scientist that Vietnamese bureaucrats are blocking investigation of a "public health emergency."

A US delegation headed by Dr. Christopher Portier of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and Dr. William Farland of the Environmental Protection Agency began two days of talks with Science and Technology Minister Chu Tuan Nha,

Vietnamese officials said.

The US Embassy declined to comment ahead of the meeting, the first between the two sides since five days of talks broke down in Singapore in November.

Washington has been trying to negotiate an agreement that will allow it to fund joint research into the scale of contamination by dioxin, the cancer-causing chemical contained in Agent Orange, which Hanoi says has blighted the lives of tens of thousands of Vietnamese.

An estimated 180 kg of dioxin was contained in the 57 million liters of Agent Orange, which US forces

sprayed during the war. Its continuing health effects are one of the most emotive outstanding issues between the former foes.

But the administration insists Hanoi must show greater scientific openness amid charges from some in Congress that it is exploiting the issue for propaganda purposes and as a means of getting its hands on US tax dollars.

Monday's talks got off to an unpromising start, coming just a day after the Vietnamese minister refused a US scientist permission to continue his research into a dioxin hotspot just outside the commercial capital of Ho

Chi Minh City which he believes constitutes a "public health emergency."

Dr. Arnold Schecter, a public health specialist from the University of Texas who has been conducting dioxin research in Vietnam for the past 17 years, expressed outrage at the decision to bar him from taking fresh blood and food samples for analysis from a former US air base at Bien Hoa.

"If we found dioxin contamination on this scale just outside Los Angeles, we'd have an emergency team in there within 24 hours," he said.

During a research trip to the former air base in 1999, Schecter detected the

highest dioxin levels recorded anywhere in Vietnam since 1973, undermining scientists' previous assumption that the toxin was gradually broken down in the environment.

Declassified records have revealed that Bien Hoa was the site of a wartime accident in which between 5,000 and 7,000 gallons of Agent Orange were spilled.

Analysis of 25 samples collected by Schecter on research visits in 1999 and 2000, found that 24 of them had dangerously high levels of dioxin contamination.

"This is an epidemic, a public health crisis," he said, adding he had

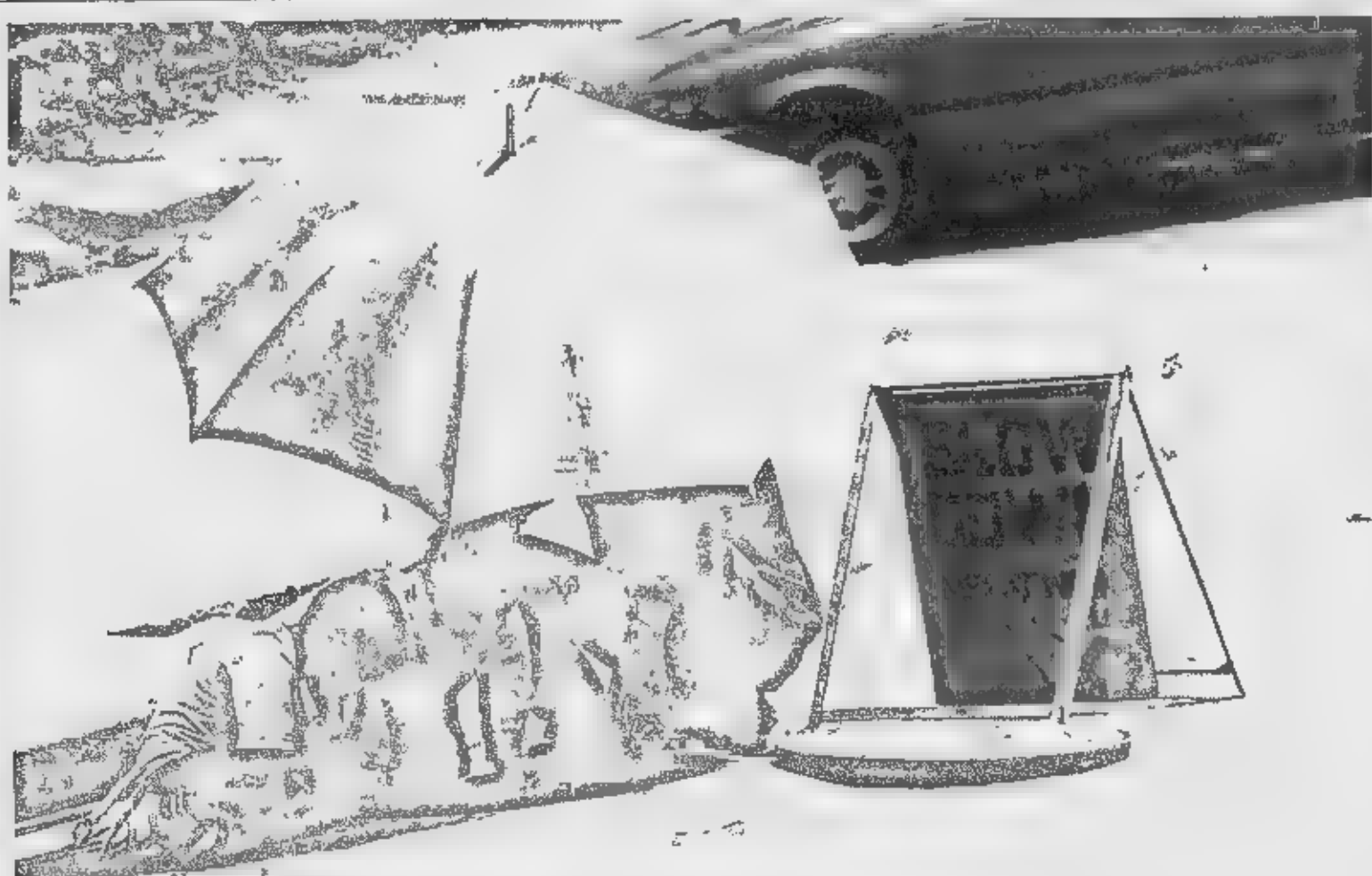
published his findings in the *Journal of Occupation and Environmental Medicine* earlier this year.

Schecter expressed astonishment at the attitude of the new Vietnamese Agent Orange working group headed by Minister Nha, saying he had received more cooperation from the communist authorities in the dark days of the Cold War.

The US scientist said it was vital that Hanoi rapidly changes its approach as a string of other suspected dioxin hotspots dotted the country and the appetite of Congress to fund a serious scientific survey of the health risks was rapidly waning.

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor



DROP IN THE BUCKET

Nothing is too cheap for two boys who dropped a toy in an uncovered manhole in Baguio City to leave to fate. A utility worker of a telephone firm joins them in the planning stage of what turned out to be an aborted recovery strategy

TOOTS SOBERANO

NBI agent says Bicol needs P500M in anti-drug war

NAGA CITY—The government would have to spend at least P500 million a year in its war against illegal drugs in the Bicol region alone, a National Bureau of Investigation agent said here.

Pio Palencia, NBI special investigator who monitors and conducts operations against the illegal drug trade in the region, said in Legazpi City alone, at least P3.9 million worth of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) are being traded every month.

"It means that four to five kilos of shabu are being consumed in Legazpi City alone in one month," Palencia said.

He said Metro Manila channel illegal drugs in Bicol through suppliers who have direct contacts with drug syndicates.

The NBI officer said suppliers are careful not to bring in more than 200 grams of shabu per transaction to enable them to post bail if they are caught.

Palencia, who was responsible for several buy-bust operations that resulted in seven death penalty convictions and 40 life sentences from

1997 to 1998, said in every Bicol town there are at least two drug suppliers who buy shabu directly from sources in Manila.

He said the suppliers maintain their own network of outlets that sell shabu to runners.

The runners who channel the illegal drugs to users are the direct contacts of the outlets.

Palencia, however, said the government's resources to arrest the growing illegal drug trade are too limited to make even a dent in the drug trade.

He said the NBI's operation against illegal drugs, covering six provinces, is not given funds.

He said P500 million would ensure the success of the fight against illegal drugs in the region.

"The government has to act decisively to seal off entries of shabu from mainland China and other countries and dismantle drug syndicates. If this is not done, the campaign against the illegal drug trade will be an endless challenge," he said.

Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Comelec failure to settle feuds ushers in 'caretakers'

BACOLOD CITY—The failure of the Commission on Elections to settle election disputes in two towns in Negros Occidental has opened the gates to the appointment of "caretakers" to run the affairs of the towns' governments.

The Department of Interior and Local Government has appointed "caretakers" in the two Negros Occidental towns after the winners of the races for mayor and other officials in the towns were not proclaimed.

The proclamation was stopped due to complaints filed by losing candidates.

Leticia Jeston, DILG field officer in San Enrique town, was appointed caretaker of the municipality effective July 1 because not one of the winning candidates in the town has been proclaimed.

The terms of office of incumbent local officials expired June 30.

Vice Mayor Romulo Rho. Mogul of

EB Magallona town was designated acting mayor because the Comelec failed to proclaim the winning candidate for mayor.

Rosemary Caunca, provincial local government officer, said the appointments of Jeston and Mogul were in accordance with Memorandum Circular No. 2001-14 issued by Interior Secretary Jose Lina Jr. on Saturday.

Based on the memorandum, DILG field officers would take over in areas where no candidate was proclaimed winner until President Macapagal-Arroyo appoints officers in charge.

The rule of succession would apply in areas where some of the candidates have been proclaimed but not the winner for governor or mayor.

Earlier, Rexdito Reyes, DILG regional director for Western Visayas, said should there be no proclaimed winner for the post of governor, the winning candidate for vice governor would

assume the post.

The same ruling applies to the position of mayor.

The proclamation of winning candidates in San Enrique town, 37.3 kilometers south of Bacolod, was stalled by the pre-proclamation protest filed by losing candidate Julius Lanza (Promdi).

Residents of San Enrique staged separate pickets at the Comelec provincial office in Bacolod and the San Enrique Municipal Hall to demand the proclamation of mayoral candidate Jilson Tubilara (ATUN) and the rest of the winning candidates in the municipality.

Tubilara said about 200 San Enrique residents participated in the picket at the Comelec provincial office.

Government offices in San Enrique, he added, were forced to shut down yesterday after about 1,000 residents

picketed the municipal hall.

In EB Magallona, Alfonso Gamboa (ATUN), who was ahead in the Comelec tally, vowed to file civil, administrative and criminal charges against the town's election officer, Susan Aranza, if she would not proclaim him this week.

He said Aranza could be held liable for violating Comelec Resolution No. 4493, which directs the board of canvassers to reconvene and proclaim winning candidates.

The resolution also provides that all pre-proclamation cases are deemed terminated at the start of the terms of newly elected officials on July 1, Gamboa said.

The board of canvassers in EB Magallona did not proclaim Gamboa as the town's elected mayor because of the protest filed by his opponent, Rex Depasac (UNA), before the Comelec office in Manila.

Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

All-out war bomb dug up, injures 4

COTABATO CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front has urged the military to search for and destroy unexploded bombs that were dropped on MILF camps during last year's all-out war in Mindanao.

The appeal came after four Muslim civilians, including an 11-year-old boy, were seriously wounded when they accidentally plowed a 60-mm mortar shell in Matanog, Maguindanao, on Sunday. Nasrodin, 11, Asim, 40 and Mokamad, 29, all surnamed Salhan and Maktad Mando, 39, suffered shrapnel wounds past 4 p.m. when the bomb exploded.

The village was inside a former MILF enclave straddling the towns of Matanog, Barira and Buldon, Maguindanao.

"The military should clear those areas of unexploded explosives," Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesman, said.

Kabalu said the MILF would formally request for the operation when peace talks resume in Kuala Lumpur later this month.

Army Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said soldiers had already detonated several unexploded bombs.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Greenpeace seeks probe of hospital incinerator

BY MA. DIOSA LABISTE
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—International environmental group Greenpeace will conduct its own investigation to determine if the Austrian-made incinerator of a government-run hospital here meets international safety standards.

In a letter to the Iloilo City-based newspaper The Visayas Examiner, Van Hernandez, Greenpeace campaign director for Southeast Asia, said the incinerator might be one of the 25 units donated to the Philippines that were already phased out in Austria because "they failed emission tests."

Hernandez also warned of the hazards posed by the waste facility to households and offices near it.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), he said, has identified medical waste incinerators as one of the major sources of

toxic dioxin emissions in the world. Dioxins are proven carcinogens and are linked to various reproductive disorders such as birth defects, high infant mortality rates and deficiencies in the immune system, he added.

Hernandez said the government should not insist on a "technology" that environmental agencies have no way of monitoring. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, he said, does not have the capacity to monitor dioxin and heavy metal emissions from incinerators.

The incinerator, a grant from the Austrian government, was built in 1998 inside the compound of the Western Visayas Memorial Hospital in Mandurriao this city.

Late last month, residents, patients and hospital personnel complained of noxious smoke coming out of the incinerator when it burns bio-medical wastes at night.

400 betting station owners cry harassment

OVER 400 operators of jai alai betting stations in the country are up in arms over what they said was a plan to put them out of business by disallowing the country's laws.

In a statement, Adriano Nacorda, one of the complaining operators, said they would be forced to file charges against officials of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. if the Pagcor failed to protect their investments.

Nacorda said jai alai betting station owners are being mistaken for operators of Bingo-2-Ball, the controversial game that was stopped after it was linked to Charlie "Atang" Ang, a close friend of deposed President Estrada.

"Pagcor invited us to invest in the jai alai operations, requiring us to pour in about P1 million for each betting station," said Nacorda.

"When Pagcor invited us to invest, we expected the government to protect

our investment," he added.

He said many of the betting station owners have pawned property to invest in jai alai, a government-sanctioned game.

Jai alai station operators urged the new management of Pagcor to check its interpretation of the SC ruling and "maybe they will see the light of what they have done to us."

The operators claim about 2,000 regular employees and 25,000 part-time workers are employed by the betting station owners.

"We have given employment to thousands of families and this is one reason I went to this business. Now, I tend to lose everything," said Nacorda, who admitted that he mortgaged his house for loans to finance his betting station.

According to him, no businessman in his right mind will invest in this country if even its citizens are not protected from whimsical application of laws.

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Saturday, July 7 • 10 AM - 7 PM, Open to the Public

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Visual Merchandising Trends
by Rino Daluin, Chief, Exhibits & Design
Division, CITEM
4 PM:
Handmade Paper Products Demo
by Cottage Industry Training Center

July 6, Friday
2 PM:
Creative Food Packaging
by Elizabeth Thomas,
General Manager, Wonderworks Kitchen
4 PM:
Fossilized Flower Making Demo
Cottage Industry Training Center

July 7, Saturday
2 PM:
Entrepreneurship 101
by Entrepreneur Phila. Magazine
Candle Making Demo
by Cottage Industry Training Center

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ROUNDUP

Fire razes market

ANGELES CITY—A three-hour fire in this city's biggest public market killed two men and razed 627 stalls, a police station and a drop-in center for street children on Sunday. Two prisoners also escaped from the Kababayan Center 12 when the fire started at 2:45 a.m. at the Rizal section of the San Nicolas public market, police said. The fire, the third to hit the public market in the last 30 years, destroyed property worth about P30 million. The charred bodies of two men were found near the office of the Councilmen's League of Angeles City in the market. *Tonette Orjeda, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Truck kills 3

MAGALANG, Pampanga—Three persons were killed while 18 others were hurt Friday when a speeding cargo truck sideswiped them along the Mabalacat-Magalang Road here. Four of the victims were waiting for a ride when the truck, driven by Amel Moron, 31, bumped them. The four were thrown into an open canal resulting in the death of Clarita Samblin, 55, and year-old Senaya Samblin. The truck sped toward the town center but bumped a parked jeepney, which fell on its side. The jeepney's 16 passengers were hurt. The truck also pinned down Alexander Garcia, 39, killing him instantly. *Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Kalinga's hope

TABUK, Kalinga—The reelection by an overwhelming majority of Rep. Laurence B. Wacnang is expected to speed up the growth of Kalinga province into one of the emerging markets in the Cordillera. Running under the People Power Coalition-Liberal Party banner, Wacnang got 42,236 votes while his two rivals got a total of 15,111 votes, or nearly 75 percent of the total votes cast in the May 14 elections. "As the Cordillera's most senior representative, Congressman Wacnang should be able to do a lot for our province," said Canilo Lammawin Jr., mayor-elect of Tabuk.

FTAAs denied

NAGA CITY—The Mines and Geosciences Bureau has denied the applications for financial and technical assistance agreement (FTAA) of three mining firms, thus, spanning 233,928 hectares in Bicol from exploration. Reynaldo Juan, Bicol MGB director, said Global Ore Minerals Inc., Golden Falcon Mineral Exploration Corp., and Guilwung Mining Inc. failed to submit environmental safety requirements under the Mining Act of 1995. Juan said the three foreign mining companies were applying to explore and mine gold, copper, zinc and silver deposits in lands straddling 13 towns in Camarines Sur and Albay. The MGB also cancelled 60 applications for mineral production sharing agreements covering 72,654 hectares. *Joan Escudero Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Manila HI 31° Lo 23°	Bugaba HI 32° Lo 24°	Tayugan HI 32° Lo 24°
Lanao HI 32° Lo 24°	Clark Zone HI 31° Lo 23°	Tayugan HI 32° Lo 24°
Laguna HI 32° Lo 24°	Boac HI 31° Lo 23°	Baco HI 32° Lo 24°
Cebu HI 32° Lo 24°	Tacolban HI 32° Lo 24°	San Sordani HI 31° Lo 23°
Zamboanga HI 31° Lo 24°	Cagayan de Oro HI 30° Lo 22°	Davao HI 32° Lo 24°

Compiled by Ray Lopez, PDI PhotoUnit/ASAP

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IFUGAO TRANSITION

New gov uses symbols to raise hopes

BY BEN MOSES EBRRO
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAGAW, Ifugao—The traditional attire of Ifugaos has taken center stage in this province's new administration.

In an expression of pride and vision for his province's development, incoming Gov Teodoro Baguilat Jr. made use of the G-string to symbolize the way he said he intends to govern.

Baguilat, 36, chose to wear his native G-string, which he described as the "barest of all essentials and the formal attire of the Ifugaos," during the turnover and oath-taking ceremony of newly elected provincial leaders here Saturday.

Baguilat, accompanied by several Ifugao men, emerged from the provincial capitol and proceeded to the venue of the ceremony accompanied by native songs, dances and rituals.

Thousands of Ifugaos cheered him on.

Outgoing Gov. Ildefonso Dulnayan failed to attend Baguilat's inauguration and preside over the turnover ceremony as he was arrested Thursday by National Bureau of Investigation agents on charges of extorting money from government contractors.

In a statement read by provincial legal officer Nicasio Baguilat, Dulnayan apologized for his absence in the program.

Dulnayan called the NBI accusation "baseless." "Circumstances have intervened which all of you and us for that matter have not expected. I am doing well. Despite the allegations that are still to be proven, I am still innocent as far as the law is concerned. I still love you and worried about all of you," Dulnayan said.

He expressed confidence that in the end, "the truth will come out and my name will be cleared and the manufactured stories will be exposed."

Native garments

Baguilat wore native garments and accessories such as Ifugao headaddresses, necklaces and pendants and carried spears and native weapons.

"The Ifugao attire will serve as

a beacon (of) what I intend to do for the next three years," he said during his inaugural speech.

He said the "Pinukha," which is used for keeping betel nuts or "Momma," would serve as a charm to promote peace and love in the province and as an offering of reconciliation among political opponents and their supporters.

He said forgiveness and humility would guide him in his governance and his bid to unite the province and put it on the right track.

He said the "Hillalang" and "Ginutu," a double bladed bolo with a wooden scabbard that symbolizes industry and courage, would be adopted as a measure of performance among the province's public servants.

A basic farm tool of the Ifugaos, the "Hillalang," must always be sharp and continuously used and symbolize efforts to empower farmers.

This, he said, would be done through the marketing of the farmers' products.

He said the establishment of an agro-industrial trade center in the province would be the focus of his agricultural development concerns.

Baguilat said the growth of agriculture in the province would be supported by infrastructure projects, such as farm-to-market roads, and the improvement of existing roads.

"Road graveling and maintenance projects shall be the least of our priorities since these projects are only temporary (and) often enrich the contractors and their benefactors," he said.

Territory

Baguilat said the "Pongot," a native headaddress symbolizing the courage and manliness of an Ifugao warrior, would be used as a symbol of Ifugao's fight for its territorial integrity and rights.

The province's ancestral domain areas, he said, is being endangered by Benguet, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Mt. Province through boundary encroachment.

He said he would strive to collect some P65 million in franchise taxes from the operation of the Magat hydroelectric power plant. The payment of taxes was delayed due to a boundary dispute with



THIRTY-SIX-YEAR-OLD Teodoro Baguilat Jr. takes his oath as new governor of Ifugao province in a ceremony rich in symbols, promises and hope.

BEN MOSES EBRRO

Isabela province.

"We have the documents to prove that a bigger chunk of Magat belongs to the Ifugao," he said. He said the "Pongot," "Ginutu" and "Hillalang" would be used as symbols in his fight against rampant robbery along the province's national highway.

"I will immediately convene the Provincial Peace and Order Council (PPOC) to stop this problem. Otherwise, heads will roll in the provincial police command," he said.

The "Baghe," a ceremonial spear symbolizing integrity and trustworthiness and is used by Ifugao emissaries, would be used as a symbol to promote the province, home of the world renowned rice terraces.

Baguilat also wore the "Balituk" and "Tang-go," gold pendants and

necklaces, to symbolize wealth. He said while Ifugaos are not wealthy, "first and foremost, we have our children (who are) far more valuable than the riches of the industrialized world."

He urged Ifugaos to double their investments in child-friendly programs like health, nutrition and education to ensure that the basic rights of Ifugao children are protected.

Part of this program, he said, is the reduction of the number of the province's malnutrition cases until 2004. He also vowed to focus on primary health care programs and services by hiring more personnel in the villages.

He also vowed to build more health centers and improve existing hospitals.

He said hospitals would be built in the remote towns of Asipulo and

Aguinaldo. To lessen the burden on local governments and to instill the spirit of cooperativism, these hospitals would be run by a cooperative and managed by residents, he said.

Environment, tourism

On the environment, Baguilat said he would focus on policies that would maximize the use of the province's resources and conserve those that would be needed by future generations.

He said he would call for a gathering of woodcarvers, environment officials, environmentalist groups and provincial officials to draw up guidelines that would ease the burden on wood carvers in getting permits to gather raw materials and transport their products.

He said the guidelines would include a requirement to plant trees.

"The policy shall guarantee that for every tree cut, 30 or more seedlings shall be planted and taken care of in exchange," he said.

Baguilat said he would use the "Baya-ung," a nobleman's blanket and symbol of moral authority and Ifugao nobility, to establish moral ascendancy.

"In order for your governor to be truly honorable, he must attempt to establish moral ascendancy in the government bureaucracy. We will (stop) graft and corruption in this provincial government," he said.

Baguilat said the "Binuglan" or G-string, the basic attire of Ifugao men and the most enduring symbol of their culture, would serve as his inspiration in establishing schools and heritage centers that would teach traditional performing arts and indigenous crafts and cultural subjects to Ifugaos.

Among the subjects are Ifugao history, mythology, loom-weaving and wine-making, he said.

Under this project, Baguilat said the first school of living traditions would be launched on July 11 in his native Kiangtan town where he served for two terms as mayor.

"To remember the policy directions and priorities of your governor, just visualize him in his native attire... I may (not meet) all of your expectations but I assure you I will serve you well," he said.

JDV allies with Estrada backers for top House post

BAKOLOD CITY—The Nationalist People's Coalition of Estrada ally Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and Rep. Jose de Venecia have entered into an alliance to boost De Venecia's chance of becoming Speaker again.

But Negros Occidental Rep. Apolinario Lozada (Lakas) said the alliance is "solely for the purpose" of giving De Venecia the top House post.

Lozada said the alliance won't hold in the provinces, where the Lakas and the NPC are in conflict over various issues.

Lozada said he does not believe that President Macapagal-Arroyo played a part in forming the Lakas coalition in the NPC to help De Venecia capture the

House top post

"It's just really between Congressman De Venecia and (Eduardo) Cojuangco," Lozada said. Cojuangco was one of the closest allies of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Cojuangco, who heads the NPC, also backs the United Nations Alliance (UNA) whose candidates captured most of the top elective posts in Negros Occidental.

Lozada belongs to a bloc in the House that calls itself progressve. It is composed of 41 congressmen from different political parties who earlier objected to De Venecia being Speaker again.

On Thursday, however, the progres-

sive bloc decided they would support De Venecia on condition that they would continue to exist as a conscience bloc in the House.

Lozada said they agreed to support De Venecia for the sake of unity in the Lakas-NUPD. But the bloc, he said, also demanded three things that De Venecia should agree to immediately.

These were: transparency in the affairs of the House, giving strong weight on qualifications in the selection of chairs and vice chairs of House committees, and that the alliance would not hold beyond De Venecia's ambition to become Speaker again.

"If De Venecia does not honor our agreement that was all verbal, then the

fight goes on," Lozada said.

A member of the so-called conscience bloc had withdrawn his bid to become Speaker.

Cebu City Rep. Raoul del Mar (Promdi), however, said he would still fight for new politics in the House.

De Mar said he had no choice but to quit the race after President Macapagal apparently supported De Venecia.

De Mar said during a meeting between leaders of the conscience bloc and the President in Manila last Friday, she acknowledged reports that De Venecia already have the numbers.

"I got the impression she was in effect conceding that De Venecia would

now be considered the PPC candidate although she stressed that she was maintaining a hands-off policy on the issue," De Mar said in a statement.

Also present in the meeting were other aspirants for the speakership—Representatives Florencio Abad (Balayan), Brown Sandoval (Palawan) and Carlos Padilla (Nueva Vizcaya).

He said the President appealed to them to remain in the majority to prevent division.

"The intramural within the PPC for the House leadership should now be over and it's time to heed the President's appeal (for unity)," Del Mar said. *Carla Gomez and Edna Benedicta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Malpractice victim's ma sues docs, nurses

BY GERRY T. PAGHARION
PDI Visayas Bureau

ROXAS CITY—The mother of a victim of alleged medical malpractice has sued an executive and three personnel of the government-run Roxas Memorial Provincial Hospital (RMPH) for the death of her son.

Charged with reckless imprudence resulting in homicide were RMPH chief officer Dr. Evelyn Albano, attending physician Rea Roldan, nurse Renna May Malan and nursing aid Rhea Aguiluz.

Jonna Leonor, mother of victim John Vic, filed the complaint at the City Prosecutor's Office on June 20.

She claimed that her son, who was confined for intestinal parasitism at the hospital, died on July 16 last year after Aguiluz injected

an oral suspension into John Vic's dextrose.

Attached to her complaint was a copy of the report made by the provincial government's fact-finding committee that found Malan and Aguiluz liable for the boy's death.

Acting on the report, Gov Vicente Bermejo fired Malan and Aguiluz from the RMPH on Aug. 10 last year and banned them from employment in all hospitals run by the provincial government.

Jonna also submitted to the city prosecutor's office a copy of an autopsy report prepared by the National Bureau of Investigation regional office in Iloilo City that listed pneumonia as the cause of the boy's death.

In her affidavit, Jonna said she and her common-law husband, Vicente de Pablo, rushed John Vic to the RMPH

on July 15 after the boy complained of stomachache.

After checking the boy's breathing, Roldan, the boy's attending physician, asked Jonna if the boy had a cough. The mother said "no."

About 10 a.m. the next day, Jonna said Roldan told her to buy Quante Suspension to be taken orally by her son as a purgative.

Jonna said her husband gave the medicine to the Nurses Station but Malan, the nurse in charge, told them to keep the medicine because she would send somebody to help them administer the medicine to John Vic.

About 6 p.m. July 16, Jonna said Aguiluz entered their room and asked for the Quante Suspension. De Pablo gave the medicine to Aguiluz who then asked Jonna to hold the boy while she was admin-

istering the medicine.

When the boy refused to take the medicine, Aguiluz decided to inject the medicine into the boy's dextrose. She reportedly assured Jonna that the procedure was safe.

Jonna said she told Aguiluz not to inject the medicine because the doctor had instructed her that it must be taken orally.

But Aguiluz allegedly ignored her and injected the suspension into the dextrose.

When the medicine was half empty, the boy took a long breath and began to shake. Jonna told Aguiluz to stop the procedure but the nursing aide allegedly assured her that the boy was just reacting to the medicine.

Minutes later, she said, her son died.

Berroya stops rice shipment for Chavit province

BY CRISTINA ARZADON
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

CURRIMAO, Ilocos Norte—A cargo vessel was stopped Friday from unloading 34,000 rice bags intended for Ilocos Sur following reports that the shipment was illegal.

Acting on orders from "higher office," the regional police's intelligence command led by SPO4 Mike Digap asked the Starlight Maritime Inc. (SMI), a cargo handler based at the international port here, to suspend the unloading while shipment documents were being verified.

Digap said they inspected the shipment on request of Supl-

Reynaldo Berroya, chief of the Philippine National Police's intelligence office.

Berroya allegedly received information from the Bureau of Customs that a rice shipment was being smuggled into the province through the Currimao port.

The vessel, MV For Laida, operated by the DJCA Merchandising in Tagum City, docked here on June 28. Its point of origin was Port Malalag in Davao del Sur.

The shipment, worth P27.2 million, was intended for consignees Crisel General Merchandising, F.A. Merchandising and Mural Merchandising, all based in Ilocos Sur.

It was composed of 5,000 bags

of "fancy" rice, 12,000 bags of regular milled rice and 17,000 bags of well-milled rice.

The SMI immediately unloaded the rice to at least six trucks and started the delivery after the vessel dropped anchor here.

Police, however, intercepted the trucks in Badoc town and ordered their drivers to return to Currimao while the shipment's documents are being verified.

The shipment only resumed late Friday night when Bill Farillas, SMI's director for security and operations, convinced authorities that the shipper's papers were in order.

Farillas showed authorities receipt payments of the shipping com-

pany, including a certification from the National Food Authority here that the shipment is considered a local inter-island transaction.

He said the vessel was to dock in Port Salomague in Ilocos Sur but a grounded Malaysian vessel in that province's port allegedly prevented the M/V For Laida from docking.

He said they unloaded the rice as soon as the NFA completed classifying the shipment and issued the certification to transfer the cargo.

"(The shipment) was delayed but this is part of business. It is a blessing in disguise because it will hopefully stop people from speculating. Everything is legitimate," Farillas told the INQUIRER.

Ador sparks network war

(From page A1)

musketees are dBb anchor Arnold Clavio, whose morning radio program is aired by GMA-7, and dBb anchor Angelo Palmones of the ABS-CBN network.

Clavio broke the story about Ador's confessed involvement in alleged illegal activities of the now defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force.

The GMA-7 broadcaster has been interviewing Ador regularly on his radio program "Double A sa Double B" since he met the latter last week.

On Saturday, during his own radio program, Palmones of ABS-CBN commented on Ador's allegations.

"Since (the police are) already doubting Ador, my initial reaction on radio was, 'Kasi kayo, naniniwala kayo sa sate (it's your fault for believing 'seven')', he told the INQUIRER, recalling what he said.

Palmones' co-anchor, Frankie Evangelista, asked, "Anong sate (What do you mean by seven)?"

To which Palmones answered, "Chismus (Gossip)."

Immediately after the program, Palmones said, he got calls from listeners asking why he was attacking GMA 7.

"Not even once did I mention the name of the network, say talk show or any radio program," Palmones told the INQUIRER.

"The TOA (tape on air) of the program can bail me out," he added.

But before Clavio went on the air yesterday morning, Palmones made an apparent reference to the allegedly unfair news coverage of "that other station."

When Clavio interviewed Ador later, it was his turn to make some digs of his own.

"How do you respond to insinuations that we are deliberately isolating you so that you will not give your story to other networks?" Clavio asked Ador in Filipino.

"Well, if the other stations really want to interview me, they should find a way. I really don't know why Channel 2 cannot contact me," Ador answered.

"Yes, that's right," Clavio said. "I mean, we are not really keeping you isolated, are we? Why the INQUIRER has interviewed you several times. If anyone really wanted to talk to you, they should find a way, shouldn't they?"

Airing sides

"You know," Clavio added, "another station complains about the way we air only one side while they have a balanced story on this issue. How is that possible when they only air the side of Ping (former PAOCTF chief Sen. Panfilo Lacson)?"

He went on: "Yes, they air the side of Ping, but not the other side. In this station, we air both sides. And then they say that we are not the balanced station!"

JDV is it . . .

(From page A1)

Macapagal-Arroyo is certain that De Venecia will clinch the premier post in the House to push her anti-poverty program and peace process initiatives.

Though the President had said she will not intervene in the fight for Speaker, she told the INQUIRER last week that De Venecia already "has the numbers."

With 140 votes, De Venecia would have secured more than the majority votes that he needs to reclaim the House leadership, which he last held in the 10th Congress.

There are 208 congressional seats for district representatives and at least 10 more for party-list representatives.

Last major rival exits

Rep. Vicente Sandoval, the last major aspirant in the race supported by the Lakas-NUCD progressive bloc, had withdrawn from the race and declared his support for De Venecia.

The only ones left to challenge De Venecia are Batanes Rep. Butch Abad of the Liberal party and Nueva Ecija Rep. Carlos Padilla.

De Venecia got the winning numbers after he won over the breakaway Lakas-NUCD faction led by the father-and-son team of Reps. Vicente Sandoval (Palawan) and Federico Sandoval (Malabon-Nayotas).

"With (Vicente) Sandoval back in the fold, Lakas has been restored to full force," said Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr.

With 86 seats, Lakas-NUCD has the most number in the Lower House.

A House source said the elder Sandoval, who was one of those being tapped as an alternative candidate for Speaker, would either be named to the powerful Commission on Appointments or chair of the House committee on Appropriations.

Prayer for guidance

Last month, the President said she would pray for guidance when asked if she would make known her choice of Speaker and Senate President.

In her press conference last Friday, the President had her answer.

"Well, in my prayer (time) I discerned that the Lord told me I don't need to interfere," she said.

"After all these are two independent branches of government and it really has to be an unusual circumstance if the President will interfere and I'm not interfering," she stressed.

'Ador' wants new test; Ping seeks probe

(From page A1)

other thing." He said he suspects that the people behind the alleged campaign to discredit him are in the higher echelons of government.

But asked whether he has specific suspects in mind, Lacson replied: "I don't want to speculate. (which is why) I want an investigation."

Lacson, former head of the now defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, said he would not initiate a Senate inquiry himself. "I'll suggest to some senators to conduct an investigation to find out who are these people behind Ador, who are his handlers," he said.

Results of Ador's polygraph test will not be ready for two or three days, NBI officials said. Lie detector tests are widely perceived to be unreliable and their results are often rejected in court as evidence of guilt or innocence.

But Justice Secretary Hernando Perez told reporters that while such results are "not conclusive," they would still assist prosecutors in assessing whether Ador would be useful in building a criminal case against those he has implicated.

Ador arrived at the NBI in Manila around 9 a.m., wearing a cap, sunglasses, and a large gray handkerchief covering the lower half of his face. He was accompanied by his wife and his lawyer.

The former agent refused to utter a single word, despite several attempts by reporters to interview him.

Last night, he demanded to retake the polygraph test in the presence of his lawyers and representatives from the INQUIRER and GMA-7.

Tense

"I took the test twice. I don't know why that is the case. I am waiting for the results right now," Ador said in a text message to an INQUIRER reporter after the polygraph exam.

Ador believes that test results indicating that he was probably telling the truth would mean a chance to finally meet with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

He has also expressed concern that test results not in his favor could mean

he would lose his chance to talk to his Macapagal.

Ador claimed he was tense during the first after being hounded by the press and being given a turnaround by NBI employees, and said he feared that his tension might have resulted in inaccurate test readings.

"It was like a wild goose chase. Reporters were chasing me when I went to the second floor for the polygraph test. Then I was asked to go to the first floor and then again to the second floor because the test would be held there," Ador told the INQUIRER.

Ador said reporters hounded him as he went from one room to another looking for the polygraph examiner.

"When I finally saw the polygraph machine, it was like an electric chair, so it added to my tension. And the examiner kept on telling me not to move, so I just became more tense," he added.

'One-tenth of truth'

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said Ador's 24-page affidavit was not signed in the presence of a lawyer and was not admissible in court.

But Ador, in an interview Sunday, said the sworn affidavit was executed with the help of lawyer Batas Mauricio and "is just one-tenth of what I have to tell the President."

Wycoco said the statement needs to be studied, re-examined and purged of errors and inconsistencies.

"He has mentioned many situations and incidents," Wycoco said. "We expect this to be a long-drawn question-and-answer session."

Ador's affidavit detailed Lacson's alleged plan to abduct or assassinate high-profile businessmen and political figures who played key roles in ousting ex-President Joseph Estrada.

The former agent also claimed to have information on the alleged murder of casino employee Edgar Benta, who disappeared after allegedly taking a video of then presidential candidate Estrada playing baccarat at the Grand Boulevard Hotel casino in Manila.

Ping suspects . . .

The NBI chief stressed that he and his men did not take Ador's charges "at face value." He said Ador's allegations would

be reviewed against data independently gathered by the bureau's investigators.

Asked if Ador would be placed under the government's witness protection program, Wycoco said that would depend on the final results of the investigation and whether the ex-agent chooses to apply for state protection.

Perez said the justice department would be ready to place him under witness protection "once we have established that and his testimony is useful."

But "first, we want to establish whether Ador is telling the truth," he stressed.

To establish motive

Lacson said he hoped that a Senate probe would not only show that Ador was lying, but would also establish the "motive" behind the alleged smear job against him.

The senator, who has been the subject of numerous investigations in the Senate and the House, told reporters that officials invited to testify at a future inquiry would not be subjected to a "shakedown," which he claimed to have experienced.

"I don't want to impose that on my former colleagues in law-enforcement," he said.

Senate observers note that Berroya would likely be at the top of the list of officials invited to testify at a congress-

sional investigation.

Lacson also promised not to recommend that the budget of the PNP intelligence unit be reduced or altogether done away with, saying "I won't resort to that cruel" move.

Can't let it pass

Lacson brushed off Ador's challenge to him to take a lie detector test, remarking: "I (won't) dignify his accusations."

But he said he was bothered by continuing reports linking him to kidnapping-for-ransom activities.

"I've never involved myself in kidnapping-for-ransom activities—not then, not now. My involvement (as PNP chief) was to solve and rescue victims," he said.

"I did not even steal government funds when I was chief of the PNP," he said. "I did not accept from illegal activities like gambling. Why will I dip my fingers into such illegal activities now?"

He admitted that although there were opportunities for him to "earn easier money," he did not succumb to temptation.

"I led by good example. That's why it really hurts if there is an accusation such as that. I cannot let it pass," he said.

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GMA gives P10B to AFP

(From page A1)

and not next year, as she had earlier announced, after learning that the current P5.4-billion budget would only be spent by the end of the year.

She said she had instructed the budget department to release P5.4 billion to the fund, and the finance and defense departments to find the balance of P4.6 billion to raise the total modernization outlay to P10 billion.

"Earlier when I spoke to the (AFP), I said that when you have spent one-third of this P5.4 billion, I would replenish it. But now I realized that this could not be spent until the end of the year, because it's only then that the bidding process will be over. Therefore, I have to revise my commitment," Ms. Macapagal said.

Her announcement elicited applause from officials of the military's four branches of service, army and civilian employees gathered at the PAF presidential hangar.

Sell presidential plane

Ms. Macapagal also said she had directed Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes to sell the presidential plane and donate the proceeds to the PAF modernization program.

"With only one C-130 in operation, the Air Force has proudly achieved so much way beyond the endurance of man and machine. What more if you have more C-130s?" the President said, noting that the lone transporter was being used not only to move troops and relief goods but also to respond to disasters such as the recent eruptions of Mayon Volcano in Albay.

"The transfer on a grant basis of one more C-130 is now going through final processing by the US Congress, and we are assured of approval. You can expect to have another C-130 soon, courtesy of our friends in the US," she said, adding that five upgraded Huey helicopters were also arriving in the next few months under the same setup.

In his remarks, General Defen-

sor stressed the need for a modern air defense system.

"It was precisely because we did not have this kind of capability that those extremists in Basilan and Jolo were able to create the ugly chapters in our national life," he said, referring to the Abu Sayyaf.

Ms. Macapagal once more thanked the PAF for its role in People Power II, which ousted Joseph Estrada and installed her as President.

Defensor is a brother of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, a staunch Estrada ally. He joined then AFP Chief of Staff Reyes when the latter withdrew the military's support from Estrada.

Ceremony

The anniversary ceremony was highlighted by the traditional high-speed flight of PAF fighter planes, a pass and review of the PAF forces, and the presentation to the President of the "command helmet" or "Helmet of Freedom."

The PAF men and women who saw action in battles against insur-

gents and threats to the country's territorial integrity were given medals and awards.

The President, dressed in a barong, rode an open jeep marked "Commander in Chief" in the traditional trooping of the line. She was accompanied by Defensor and PAF ground commander Brig. Gen. Augusto Francia.

The ceremony would have been perfect if not for a couple of hitches.

The jeep carrying the President and Defensor made two false starts during the trooping of the line. The second time the jeep did not start, Defensor alighted and led the President to walk the few meters to the stage.

And then there was the parachute of a skydiving airman that got caught in the perimeter fence of the presidential hangar.

Nevertheless, the President said she was happy to be back at the Villamor Air Base, from where, she noted, she took off every week en route to her official destinations.

Soldiers given option to own land in cemetery

By JULIET L. JAVELLANA

A TOTAL of 224 soldiers' families now have the option to buy the land they are squatting on at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced yesterday.

The President said she was saddened that "some elements sensationalized" the plight of the soldiers' families living in a part of the heroes' cemetery, which is declared a national shrine and therefore off-limits to housing.

"I have a special attachment to the Libingan ng mga Bayani. My parents are buried there," she said, pointing out that her mother Evangelina Macapagal also rehabilitated the shrine as part of her civic work as first lady.

"But even then, when my father (Diosdado Macapagal) was President, he (allocated) a part of the Libingan to serve as home lots for soldiers and their families. His proclamation was set aside by his successor (Ferdinand Marcos) and therefore I have reissued the proclamation," she added.

The President thanked Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes for "vol-

unteering to withdraw an eviction order" issued earlier, and which was strongly protested by the families of active soldiers.

She said the proclamation would allow the carving out of a portion of the national shrine for housing the soldiers and their families.

"This proclamation will give the chance for our soldiers living in the designated area to buy the land and therefore be squatters no more," Ms. Macapagal said, adding.

"What is more important is the well being of the living soldiers, even as we pay homage to the soldiers who have died, including the departed commanders in chief like my father who are buried in the Libingan ng mga Bayani. I know that my father in his grave will be honored to have living soldiers, not just dead soldiers, as his next-door neighbors."

In her proclamation, the President excluded at least six lots in Taguig from the coverage of Proclamation No. 208 dated May 1967, which established the national shrine and earmarked the prime lots for soldiers' housing.

'Military operations hinder release of hostages'

(From page A1)

med this in a television interview.

"That is not true. He (Lidjal) is not with the MILF," Kabalu also said.

But in Manila, Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, spokesperson of the Armed Forces, identified Lidjal as a battalion commander of the MILF in Basilan.

Adan said information coming from AFP ground commanders appeared to show that the Abu Sayyaf and the MILF were at odds "over an agreement, whatever that is."

The self-styled negotiator, who had said that Chua and Bautista would be released in 48 hours, said other hostages under the care of the Lantawan-based Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon would also be freed.

"This will be a package deal. Not only two but six hostages will be released maybe in two to three days from now," he said.

He named the others as Dos Palmas hostages Ange Montalegre and Ma. Fe Rosendo and Lamitan nurses Ediborah Yap and Reina Malonzo.

"(There's a) bonus. (Let's hope) the release (will proceed)," he said.

Sobero

Adan dismissed a claim made by MILF ground commanders that Guillermo Sobero—one of the three Americans taken by the Abu Sayyaf on May 27 from Dos Palmas resort in Palawan—was still alive.

"We have no reason to believe he is alive," Adan said, and cited the testimony of freed hostage Francis Ganson that on the night of June 11, Sobero was tied up, separated from the other hostages, and was never seen again.

On June 12, Sabaya announced that his group had beheaded Sobero as an "Independence Day gift" to the government.

While Sobero's body has yet to be found, the AFP now presumes him dead.

"If Sobero is alive, then well and good," Adan said. But he challenged the MILF to produce the American's "living body" to prove its claim.

Struggling with grief

In Corona, California, the Asso-

ciated Press quoted Sobero's estranged wife as saying that she was taking strength from her children even as she struggled with her grief.

"There are moments where I feel I can't do this... where I just want to walk out," Fanny Sobero said in an interview published Sunday in the Riverside Press-Enterprise. "Then I see my babies' faces, and I know I'm the only one they have."

But Fanny Sobero believes her husband is alive.

She said her life focus had shifted from raising her three young boys and running the family's waterproofing business to juggling calls from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation and State Department, and the media.

All the while, she said, she was struggling to pay her bills and cope with conflicting reports about whether her husband was dead or alive.

She said she had told her two older sons, Paul and Andre, ages six and three, that their father was in an accident in the Philippines and was badly hurt.

Louis, who just turned two, is too young to grasp the situation, she said.

Divorcing

Fanny said Paul cried for the first time last week, and Andre had also cried and demanded to see his father.

She said she still cared for her husband although they were in the process of divorcing. She described him as "a loving father."

She said she was focusing on the present and striving to provide a sense of stability for her children.

"In the last week I realized that I have to go back and start to get our lives back on a routine, for our kids' sake," Fanny said. "They're so needy of me right now. I realize that I need to concentrate on them."

Arrests

Three more suspected Abu Sayyaf members, Mupin Limbong and Yacub Ayub, were arrested by authorities on Saturday while they were attending a death anniversary in Tumuhubong, Sumisip, Basilan.

Col. Danilo Servando, AFP Southern Command spokesperson, said Limbong and Ayub, who fell

into the hands of the Task Group Tornado of the 103rd Army Brigade, were identified as among those who staged the March 2000 kidnapping of teachers and students in Sumisip.

Residents who noticed the presence of the two were the ones who quickly informed the military, Servando said.

In Sulu, Abu Sayyaf member Jackarias "Jack" Abdulrahim, 25 and a resident of Bus-Bus, was also arrested by members of Task Force Tornado.

He is said to be 55th in the military's order of battle.

In Patikul, Sulu, soldiers belonging to the 6th Scout Ranger Company and the 4th Scout Ranger Battalion engaged some 60 armed members of the Abu Sayyaf in a 30-minute battle on Sunday morning.

A soldier identified as Pfc Rommel C. Bansa was wounded during the battle. The military claimed that the bandits also suffered casualties.

Odd man out

The MILF is playing the odd man out role in war-torn Basilan.

On one hand, it has ordered its fighters to arrest Abu Sayyaf gunmen who are the subject of more than a month of military operations.

Yet at the same time, the MILF has instructed its warriors not to allow pursuing government forces to encroach on its bases, and to engage soldiers if necessary.

But one thing is sure, according to Kabalu. The MILF will not move out of Basilan despite an earlier warning by the AFP that it will confront any armed group it encounters along the way.

Adan earlier said that government forces were priming for a "decisive battle" to end the hostage crisis.

"We have no reason to pull back. Where will our fighters go? They are native residents," Kabalu told defense reporters by phone.

Kabalu claimed the MILF had 2,000 fighters in the towns of Tipo-Tipo, Lantawan and Tuburan.

But the AFP estimates the number of secessionist rebels there at 100.

Kabalu also scored the AFP for previously charging that the MILF

was giving sanctuary and combat support to Abu Sayyaf gunmen.

He said the AFP was dragging the MILF into the picture "in order to justify the future failure of their operation."

"We have in fact instructed our fighters in Basilan to arrest the Abu Sayyaf if they encounter them," Kabalu said.

Scapegoat

"They (the AFP) are using close to 10,000 men, but their mission has yet to be accomplished. They said we helped the Abu Sayyaf in Lamitan. We never helped them. They are using us as a scapegoat," he added.

Kabalu said MILF fighters would go on active defense if pursuing government forces hit their bases in Basilan.

On paper, there is a truce between the government and the MILF as the two parties have resumed peace negotiations.

Kabalu said: "They (the MILF fighters) have to fight back. That is the existing order, although we have (an MILF-declared) suspension of offensive military action in place."

The MILF declared the suspension of offensives more than a month ago, in response to the Macapagal administration's own declaration of a suspension.

Asked if MILF fighters would pursue military forces that would attack their positions, Kabalu said: "That would be at the discretion of our field commanders."

Challenge

Kabalu said that if the government believed that the MILF was working in tandem with the Abu Sayyaf, it should bring up the matter in the second round of peace talks scheduled to start in the third week of July in Kuala Lumpur.

He said the members of the government peace panel did not raise the issue in the first round of talks in Tripoli "because they have no justification that we are indeed supporting the Abu Sayyaf."

Kabalu said the MILF might protest the military's continued allegations of a tie-up with the Abu Sayyaf "at the proper time."

Jeepney drivers seek 50c fare hike

(From page A1)

Piston, Baguio Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), Kilusang Mayo Uno and Kilusang Magbubuklod ng Pilipinas (KMP) staged a two-hour rally in front of the main office of Pilipinas Shell in Makati City.

They demanded a price rollback, claiming that greed was the primary motivation behind the price increases.

Instead of a price rollback, the public may yet get another round of fuel price increases.

Phased increase

"Our lower-than-expected increase considers the calls of the government and the public for a phased-increase approach to our product pricing," Virginie A. Ruivivar, Petron corporate communications manager, said in a statement.

Last month, Ruivivar said Petron was expecting an increase of 53 centavos per liter.

She said the price adjustment took into account the increase in the cost of Dubai crude from an average of \$24.18 per barrel in April to \$25.60 per barrel in May.

She also noted that the peso depreciated against the US dollar from P50.30 in April to P50.50 in May.

As a rule, local petroleum prices increase by 35 centavos per liter for every dollar increase in crude prices. And local oil prices go up by 15 centavos per liter for every P1-depreciation of the Philippine currency against the dollar.

For its part, Caltex said it raised its prices in response to market conditions.

Piston, its XCS Plus, P19.01, unleaded gasoline P18.40, diesel, P14.64; and kerosene, P14.14.

Caltex is now charging P19.08 per liter for Vortex Gold, P18.57 for Vortex Silver, P14.73 for diesel and P14.78 for kerosene.

Pilipinas Shell's wholesale posted price for Shell Super is now P18.61 per liter; unleaded gasoline, P18.10; diesel, P14.36, and kerosene, P13.93.

Prices of all other petroleum products remain the same.

"We are hoping that the current crude oil price and peso-dollar rate stabilize so that present pump prices hold in the coming weeks," Pilipinas Shell vice president Reynaldo Gamboa said.

Like Shell, new oil firm Eastern Petroleum Corp. raised its prices on Sunday.

An official of TotalFuelElf Philippines Corp. said the company would increase its prices within the week.

Energy Secretary Vincent S. Perez said the new round of fuel price increases should not be blamed on the deregulation of the oil industry.

Critics have said the deregulation made price increases more frequent.

Blame Saddam, Abu Sayyaf

"This should be blamed on Saddam Hussein and the Abu Sayyaf," Perez said in a press briefing.

Perez said that Iraq's recent decision to cut oil production contributed to the rise in crude prices and that the Abu Sayyaf's kidnapping spree was pushing the peso value downward.

Roda told the INQUIRER that Piston would lobby Congress for the repeal of the law deregulating the oil industry.

He said this year's series of oil price

increases showed that the law was useless in protecting the interests of Filipinos, particularly the poor.

Roda said President Macapagal-Arroyo should change the government's policy of deregulation in the oil industry.

Using Malacañang's sobriquet for the President, Roda said "Ate Glo" should push her allies in Congress to repeal the Oil Deregulation Law.

"This is Ate Glo's chance to prove (to us) that she's really pro-poor," he said.

Speaking before some 100 protesters at the Shell building in Makati, Roda said there was no truth to the claims of the country's top three oil firms that they were losing money.

He said the weakening of the peso against the dollar had no effect on oil prices at this time as the oil firms were maintaining a combined 45-day oil inventory.

'Super-profiteering'

Describing Pilipinas Shell's 37-centavo price increase as a classic "super-profiteering through cheating," Bayan asked the President and the 13th Congress to institute measures, including the return of price controls, against the "greed and avarice" of multinational oil firms.

The KMP urged Ms. Macapagal to immediately act on what it described as a "calamity" worse than the eruptions of Mayon Volcano.

"This oil cartel-made disaster will further heighten the economic displacement of the Filipino people," KMP secretary general Danilo Ramos said.

Stealth

Bayan secretary general Teodoro

Casilo said the government should investigate the "stealthily announced and implemented oil price hike."

He lamented that the Estrada and Macapagal administrations had refrained from investigating the "documented" overpricing, transfer pricing and tax evasion schemes committed by Shell, Caltex and Petron.

Casilo said they had received reports that oil firms make at least P20 billion in profits yearly through overpricing.

In response to intelligence reports that more protest actions are scheduled against the oil firms, the Makati City police force has been placed on alert.

Senior Supt. Jose Gutierrez, Southern Police District Office director, said he placed the Makati City police force on heightened alert to prevent any untoward incident from happening in the country's financial district, where the country's top three oil firms hold their respective main offices.

Petron has an office on Buendia Avenue, Pilipinas Shell on Valero Street and Caltex Philippines on Ayala Avenue.

In Lucena City, a coalition of farmers' organizations denounced the fuel price increases as "cruel and insensitive" to the plight of the Filipino people.

"Don't let them realize that the Filipino people still suffer from expenses brought about by the school opening!" Rene Cerilla, president of Ugayyan ng mga Magasaaka sa Quezon, said.

With reports from Philip C. Tubera and Andrea Trinidad-Echeveriz in Manila and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI South-

ern Luzon Bureau

Baguio club security...

(From page A1)

feud pitting his 81-year-old widow Erlinda and three of their six children on one side, and three other children allied with their father on the other.

'Bomb threat'

The BCC security chief refused to give any information about the "bomb threat" even as he rigorously imposed a BCC management directive to bar the INQUIRER from the club's premises.

Supt. Villamor Bumanglag, Baguio police director, assured the INQUIRER that there was no bomb threat at the club, "at least, none that was officially reported to the local police."

Bumanglag said the BCC management had requested the police to help "calm things down" as Ilusorio family members prepared to hold funeral rites for the patriarch today.

Ilusorio's ashes, which had been reportedly taken to the club as early as Sunday, are to be scattered today on the club's golf course.

The INQUIRER learned that the widow and the children allied with her have chosen to remain in Manila to avoid a confrontation with family members hostile to them.

Cancelled mass

A funeral Mass is to be held this morning at the Baguio Cathedral.

A funeral Mass was earlier planned for 10 a.m. yesterday at the St. Joseph Church here, but was cancelled at 9:30 a.m. by a "tall Chinese mestizo," a church employee said.

Many Baguio residents and club members said they would stay away from the ceremony, obviously wary that it could end in yet another family scandal.

"The news about the family quarrel disturbs us and we really do not want to be in the middle of this. It has caused the club to become polarized over the issue. Members were expected to take sides and the few who didn't want to were immediately marked out as enemies," said one BCC member who had been invited to attend today's funeral Mass.

The family feud exploded in public two years ago in a series of criminal complaints, counter-charges and custody suits that reached all the way up to the Supreme Court.

Club members are well acquainted with the 1999 civil suit filed by Ilusorio's widow, Erlinda Kalaw-Ilusorio, against her own children for allegedly preventing her from getting access to her husband.

Mrs. Ilusorio and her children Marietta, Shereen and Ramon have accused siblings Sylvia Ilusorio-Yap, Maximo and Ma. Erlinda Ilusorio-Bidner of deliberately concealing the patriarch from his wife.

Family feud

An article which appeared in the INQUIRER's July 1 issue cited Erlinda's autobiography, "On the Edge of Heaven," where the widow said the family squabble was a battle over Ilusorio's fortunes.

Ilusorio's reported assets of P300 million are distributed among his shares in the Baguio Country Club, Fidelity Farms and real estate properties here and in Central Luzon, as well as earnings from blue-chip stocks.

Ilusorio is also said to own shares in the Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. because of his reported closeness to the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

In a Dec. 15, 1999 letter to the INQUIRER Northern Luzon Bureau, Sylvia Ilusorio, Ma. Erlinda Ilusorio-

Budner and Maximo Ilusorio argued that they were simply "protecting (their) father's primordial rights to his life, his liberty and to his property."

"These inherent rights come first and foremost before any conjugal rights (of cohabitation, visitation, and/or even inheritance property rights) can even be considered. We are firm in our resolve to continue following our father's well-meant and oft-expressed wishes to ensure his well-being, dignity and happiness, especially during his remaining years with us," the siblings said.

Not informed

On Saturday, the widow asked the NBI to locate Ilusorio's remains, which had been allegedly kept from her by the children allied with the late Ilusorio.

She apparently had not been informed when her husband died last Thursday.

One of the daughters allied with the mother said they had learned about the death of their father only through intermediaries.

Police sources said the BCC security had been organized for the protection of the Ilusorio widow and her children, Marietta, Shereen and Ramon.

The BCC board's executive committee is currently headed by Sylvia Ilusorio-Yap. The board's president, lawyer Federico Agcaoli, was not available for comment.

Yesterday, every vehicle entering the BCC gates was met by about six armed security people, who proceeded to search car compartments and chassis using a mirror mounted on a long metal stem.

"We're doing this because of a bomb threat. We received it yesterday (Sunday)," a security guard said in Filipino while his colleagues searched the trunk of a taxicab carrying a club guest.

Police officers who were requested to beef up security did not carry a single service firearm.

"We did not expect that we would need them," a policeman said.

The police officers did not also participate in the BCC security checks at the gate.

What the police were advised to watch out for was "unwanted scandal," which the Ilusorio funeral is expected to draw, said POI Philip Fines of the Baguio police's Precinct 3.

"Police presence will probably deter any scandal there," he said in Filipino.

Club concerns

But a BCC member said that what everyone is really watching out for is how the Ilusorio siblings will resolve the family feud.

Most club members are seriously concerned about how Ilusorio's shares will be distributed to the siblings, as they are well aware of two other members interested in getting control of one of the country's most exclusive clubs, the source said.

The real bombshell is expected to come in November during the stockholders' meeting and general elections when stockholders elect seven board members.

"That will be the time we can finally tell what Nanoy wrote in his will," the source said.

Mrs. Ilusorio stands to get half of the 216 shares in

German connection

IN terms of international exposure, local amateur Latin dance champions Belinda Adora and Bong Marquez pale in comparison to their rivals who have too much experience, skill and talent in world-class competitions.

That is why the Dance Sports Council of the Philippines, headed by tireless Becky Garcia, is leaving nothing to chance by providing Belinda and Bong, the Philippine representatives to the World Games in Akiya, Japan, with a German coach who will give them special training for the international dancefest next month.

"We need foreign coaches badly," said Garcia. "It will entail a lot of money to bring them here, but we need their presence in the country."

One of these foreign coaches is renowned German dance coach and adjudicator Wolfgang Opitz. Aside from polishing the skills of Belinda and Bong, Opitz will also head the panel of foreign judges that will adjudicate the DSEP's fifth mid-year ranking and competition for the Asian Cup on July 14 at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium. The other judges will come from Hong Kong and Singapore.

Since 1996, the council has made waves in the international dance scene. And the country's coming participation in the World Games in August is proof enough that dancesport in the Philippines has really taken enormous strides when ranged against the other dance organizations which have been in existence for ages.

"We never have anything like this," said a beaming Becky Garcia, who also chairs the education and culture commission of the Philippine Olympic Committee. "We are barely five years old yet we have already competed against the world's leading dancers. And our Latin dancers are now even ranked among the best in Asia."

"At long last, dancesport in the Philippines has come of age," stressed council chair lawyer Noel Laman.

"Furthermore," said council vice president Jun Herrera, "Filipino dance athletes are expected to garner more points in their international campaigns because they now have their own modern training center at the PhilSports Arena, courtesy of the Philippine Sports Commission."

Last year, the council staged several nationwide competitions, conducted workshops to upgrade the standard of local techniques and took part in Asian dancefests and international congresses. Local dancesport aficionados also had the good fortune of seeing world champions perform here, such as standard dance professional pair Sachia and Olga Zerkovitch of Russia, pro Latin champions Jukka Huopainen and Sirpa Suutari of Finland and European Latin standouts Jason Roditis and Tonia Kosovich of Greece. While the celebrated Marcel de Rijk, chair of the Dance Teachers Committee of World Dancers and Dance Sports Council, and Dutch professional Latin champions Ian Waite and Natalia Panina also came and showed their savvy here.

CLEAN LIVING



Manolo R. Inigo

Dacia MBA's Hardcourt Hero

THOUGH he lost to his Fil-Am teammate Raffy Reavis in last year's Rookie of the Year honors, Bruce Dacia has kept the high intensity and intense talent that caught the fancy of MBA fans and die-hard supporters of the reigning National Champion Andok's San Juan Knights.

This 23-year-old high-leaper from Polomolok, South Cotabato, the current leader in the Most Improved Player award derby, is

slowly but surely earning recognition as the sixth man in the Knights' roster.

During the Knights' last two wins, the 6-foot-2 off-guard, who was a former player of the University of Visayas Lancers, was instrumental in putting the Knights on top of the team standings with the Negros Slashers. Both have 6-2, win-loss slates.

During the Knights' 137-105 revenge win

against Cebuana Lhuillier, Dacia topscored for the defending champions with 25 points. He had 2 rebounds, 3 assists and 1 steal, earning him the MBA Press Corps recognition as Hardcourt Hero of the Week for June 24 to June 29.

And even before their 108-75 conquest of the Gems, Dacia also contributed 20 points, 3 rebounds, 3 assists, 1 block and 2 steals in the Knights' 114-90 win over the Socsargen Marlins.

Dacia is a former teammate of former Cebu local hotshot Donato Montiveros in Sunpride at the Cebu Basketball League where he was named as the tournament MVP in 1998.

Knights' assistant coach Allan Borromeo and team owner Sandy Javier spotted him and gave him an offer he could not refuse to play for San Juan last year.

The rest, as the cliché goes, is history.

Much better UP this time, says coach

THE COACH of the University of the Philippines Fighting Maroons has guaranteed he'll have a much better team in the coming UAAP season.

That's because when the 64th edition of the UAAP fires off on July 14 at the Araneta Coliseum, UP will have three things it didn't have last year—more preparation, a legitimate center and the confidence to finish strongly in the endgame.

"I was appointed coach last year, mga two weeks before the start of the actual tournament, so obviously we didn't have the kind of preparation we had like this year," said coach Ryan Gregorio, whose wards finished tied for sixth in last year's tourney with a 4-10 slate.

The youthful UP mentor, who also acts as Eric Altamirano's assistant at Purefoods in the PBA, said lack of preparation was the cause of their failure to perform well in the endgame.

For the record, 6 of the Maroons' 10 defeats last season were by 4 points or less. Four of those six defeats came against three of the teams that made it to the Final Four.

Learning from those lessons, UP has embarked on a mission to improve on their skills and gain more experience during this year's pre-season.

UP finished second to MLQU in the Philippine Youth Basketball League. It landed third in their bracket in the Pr. Martin's Cup, where they beat the tournament's Top 2 teams—FEU and San Sebastian.

"With the kind of preparation we had, hopefully by the time the actual tournament starts, meron na kami confidence to win games especially in the endgame," said Gregorio, adding a semifinal slot for UP could be a possibility this year.

"The Final Four is always a dream," said Gregorio. "I think that's attainable with the kind of confidence we built during the pre-season. Nag-mature na ang larang kumakatawan ng players. And actually ang isang kulang lang talaga namin last year, iyoung inside presence."

Gregorio said the acquisition of 6-foot-4 Kenneth Robin, a recruit from Don Bosco in Cebu, filled the void at the paint.

Also expected to play key roles for UP are Patrick Madarang, who is back on the roster to finish off his UAAP career hopefully in style, Mike Bravo, Robson Bomanan, Mark Jomales and Xavier Nunag.

The other players on the Maroons' lineup are Vicente Aranz Jr., Toti Almada, Jereh Ibañez, Bruce Quebral, Alberto Gaudabon Jr., Josant Cervantes, Rodel Celso, Abby Santos, Rebulida Jr. and their only rookie, Gino Ferrer.

Cameroon qualifies

YAOUNDE, Cameroon Cameroon and South Africa became the first nations in qualifying to earn berths in next year's World Cup, and four-time champion Brazil stumbled again, losing 1-0 in Uruguay. The United States, meanwhile, lost 1-0 in Mexico on Sunday, its first defeat in six games in the final round of the North and Central American and Caribbean region. The Americans (4-1-1) dropped out of first place behind Costa Rica (4-1-1), which won 3-2 at third-place Honduras (2-2-2). Mauricio Solis scored the go-ahead goal in the 82nd minute at Tegucigalpa. The top three nations qualify in the CONCACAF region.



WIMBLEDON ACTION

Lindsay Davenport of the United States returns a shot to Switzerland's Patty Schnyder during their singles match on the No. 1 court at Wimbledon. Davenport won, 6-2, 6-3. Action resumes today in the world's most prestigious tennis tournament.

Fil-American Friendship run to kick off MJC festival races

THE MANILA Jockey Club, the country's premier race club, unveiled yesterday one of its biggest racing projects for the year with the launching of the inaugural Fil-American Friendship Racing Festival starting tomorrow at the San Lazaro Hippodrome.

Boostered by its recent record streak, capped by an all-time single day record gross on Gran Copa Day, MJC aims to preserve its momentum with another explosive 5-day parade of stakes and special races culminating in the "Horseman's Cup," the third and final leg of the Philippine Triple Crown series.

"As we have long promised our loyal patrons and industry partners, we would like to underscore that MJC is seriously committed to promote the accelerated growth and development of the local horse racing industry until it has reached its true potential," said MJC

president, lawyer Alfonso R. Reynao Jr. in yesterday's press conference at the MJC Turf Room.

An impressive parade of seven (7) top money races and a slew of Special Races will be on tap for the duration of the five-day racefest.

"The holding of the 1st Fil-Am Friendship racefest is certainly an opportune occasion for us to recall the valuable contribution of our American allies in popularizing the sport of horse racing at the turn of the century by democratizing horse ownership and by allowing public betting in the sport," Reynao noted.

Headlining the week-long festivities is the running of the Philracom "Horseman's Cup," the final leg of the local Triple Crown championship, which has gained an interesting

twist following the recent loss of heavy favorite Silver Story in a regular race last Sunday.

The celebrated grey galloper who is just a win away from achieving the elusive Triple Crown sweep suffered a shocking defeat against an unheralded rival in a development that has put the outcome of the coveted series finale in total disarray.

Prominent Filipino horseman, Don Antonio O. Florendo, will be the cup honoree this year in tribute to his valuable contribution to the growth of the sport for more than 50 years.

Lending support to the P167-million championship showdown would be the running of the P300,000-guaranteed Philracom Challenge Stakes Race involving some of the major contenders in the recent Philracom Cup Division II of the Gran Copa de Manila.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGIAT

TENNIS Wimbledon, Day 7 Highlights at 8 a.m. (f-r 8 p.m.), Day 7, Round of 16 at 12 noon (f), Day 8 Singles Quarter Finals at 9 p.m. on Star Sports ATP Tennis Show at 7 p.m. (f) on ESPN GOLF PGA Career Grazier Hartford, Second Round at 9 a.m. (f) on Star Sports U.S. Senior Open, Final Round at 1 p.m. (f) on ESPN LPGA Shortcuts Classic, First Round at 11 p.m. on ESPN BASKETBALL WNBA - Detroit Shock vs New York Liberty at 8 a.m. (f-r 9 p.m.) on ESPN

RP Embassy joins German cagefest

THE BONES & Bears team of the Philippine embassy in Germany participated in the 3rd Filipino Catholic Community Basketball Tournament held in Essen, Germany, last month.

Coached by Ambassador Jose Abeto Zaide, Bones & Bears dumped the Wild Wings, 40-13, but bowed to the Caviteños, 39-24.

Members of Bones & Bears, which returned to Berlin with two trophies, including one for the most disciplined team, were Ambassador Zaide, consul general Joey Jimeno, consuls Solphine Confiado and Gary Auxilian, protocol officer Ronnie Villanueva, Jamil

Zaide, Moli Morales, Eric Rubas, Jimmy Jimeno, Andre Confiado, Ron Carl Morales, Jimbo Peculiar and Rey de la Paz.

The team's muses were Ruthie Mae Patricia and Ann Monique Villanueva, while honorary consul Manfred Schnell and Heinz van Opstal were team managers. ABS-CBN Europe, through SVP and managing director Remigio David, provided the team's uniform.

Fathers Dietmar Weber and Manny Tamayo were the prime movers of the FCC league, which brought together Filipino community organizations from all over North Rhine Westphalia.

Alcantara faces Chio for Milo netfest crown

VALENCIA, Bukidnon—Francis Casey Alcantara of Cagayan de Oro ousted Teofilo Salomon, 6-4, 6-2, and will meet Inatso's Bobby Chio, a 6-4, 6-2 winner over Jopy Mamawal for the boys' 12-under division crown in the 2001 Milo Junior Tennis Cup & Regional Workshop here.

Alcantara guns for a rare double when the Grade 3 Xavier student tangles with Darwin Realista of Butuan, who edged Robert Ortellano, 6-3, 7-5, in the mixed 10-under bracket.

In the girls 12-under class, Jecille Ortellano routed Nikku de Dios, 6-1, 6-1, to barge into the final against Anafit Salomon in the Milo netfest organized by the CTW and supported by Adidas and Sports Kids.

Duma Boloto likewise goes for two championship trophies when the Marawi Netter meets Jessie Gorillo in the boys' 16-under division, and then takes on Kevin Realista in the boys' 14-under group. Ara Micayabas measures Grace Ann Nihalvos for the girls' 14-under class jewel.

No final-round collapse for Mickelson at Hartford

CROMWELL, Connecticut—Phi. Mickelson overcame his history of final-round collapses, shooting a 2-under-par 68 Sunday for a one-stroke victory over Billy Andrade in the Greater Hartford Open.

Booming long drives and staying out of trouble most of the day, Mickelson finished at 16-under 264.

He earned \$558,000 for his 19th career victory to push his season total to \$3,569,724, second behind Tiger Woods. He also has three

runner-up finishes and four thirds this year.

He began the round with a one-stroke lead over David Berganio Jr., after shooting a 61 on Saturday — tying the course record and two strokes better than his previous tour best.

King, 45, wins

ABSECON, New Jersey—Betsy King proved at the ShopRite LPGA Classic that golfers in their 40s can still compete against players half their age. King, 45, became the third American

to win an LPGA event this year, shooting a 4-under-par 67 for a 201 total. The other American winners were in their 40s, too: Juli Inkster, 41, and Rosie Jones, 40.

Montgomerie prevails

CORK, Ireland—Colin Montgomerie is not only back to winning, he also predicts the winning score. Accurately. After his opening 8-under-par course record 63 in the Irish Open on Thursday, Montgomerie predicted the winning total would

be twice 8-under plus two—and so it proved. Sunday, Montgomerie scored his first European Tour victory in 57 weeks, shooting a final round 66 to finish 18-under-par on 266.

Fleisher seniors champ

PEABODY, Massachusetts—A year after losing a final-round lead to a red-hot rival, Bruce Fleisher won the U.S. Senior Open by a stroke Sunday for his first major title as Jack Nicklaus and other challengers fell off the pace.

SPORTSWATCH

Cordova, others inducted

THE PHILIPPINE Sportsmen Society held its induction of officers and directors in Quezon City recently with Senior Police Supt. Ernesto Belen as speaker and inducting officer. Executive Secretary Renato Corona delivered the main address. Inducted were Rep. Jack Enrile as board chair, Ray Cordova (president), Dr. Cesar Guzman (vice president), Herny Herrera (treasurer), Amel Dimasno (secretary) and Danny de la Paz of Amnscor (pro). Composing the board of directors are Ed Fernandez, A. Acuna, Lex Gregorio, B. Manual, F. de Guzman, Fr. G. Ramo, Dr. G. Mejia, E. Dalican, C. Ferri and Ruben Manuel.

NCFP chessfest

THE NCFP Non-Master (Quezon City) Active Chess Championship comes off the wraps on July 8, 9:30 a.m., at Egel's Sizzling House, 22 Matalino St., (beside Allied Bank, at the back of QC Hall), Duman, Quezon City. Organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP), the one-day chess event is open to all untitled players, rated or unrated. It offers a total cash prize of P10,000 with the champion winning P4,000. Interested participants can inquire at the NCFP offices at tels. 435-1114 or 435-1113.

Javelin record

ATHENS, Greece—Cuba's Orelidsy Menendez set a new world record in the women's javelin Sunday with a throw of 71.54 meters in the one-day Vardinoyannis athletics meet held on the Greek island of Crete. Menendez bettered the mark of 69.48 meters held by Norway's Trine Solberg-Hallestad since July 28, 2000. Solberg-Hallestad is an Olympic and two-time world champion. The record was set during the meet in the port city of Redimonia, an annual event held in memory of Pavlos Vardinoyannis, a member of the Vardinoyannis shipping family.

Bulljack derby today

THE MUCH-AWAITED Bulljack 4-Cock Derby will be held today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Paraga City.

Hosted by Bulljack, one of the best known breeders and conditioners in the country, this derby will be participated in by the members of Ucap, Pasay Group and the Araneta Group.

Art Lopez of Bacolod, Louie Kua, Ruel Ricalfort, lawyer Rudy Salud, lawyer Santos, Lito Orillosa, William Go and others also confirmed their participation in this exciting battle of feathered warriors.

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Epson lady booters prevail

DAVAO CITY—Epson-Davao City smashed Ict Mangpower-Davao B, 5-1, Sunday to handily retain the Rexona National Women's football crown at the packed Kapitlan Tinio Monteverde Sports Complex here. Top striker Leonor Salome scored two goals to raise her tally to 11 markers as the Ink Jet booters capped their campaign in the Rexona-sponsored tourney organized by the Philippine Football Federation without dropping a single match.

SPORTS

A.L.S. MENDOZA, Editor ■ EDWIN M. VELANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Pro racer dies in accident

PERRIS, California — Professional motorcycle racer Robert Damron died in a collision while racing at the Perris Auto Speedway. He was 36. The accident happened Saturday during the first lap of the West Coast Flat Track Series when he collided with two other riders, according to the Riverside Press-Enterprise. Damron was thrown from his motorcycle and hit by oncoming bikes racing at speeds of more than 100 mph (160 kph). AP

NEGOTIATIONS

PSC offers help to BAP row

BY JUNE NAVARRO

THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission yesterday offered its help to end the leadership crisis besetting the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

In a press statement, PSC Chair Carlos Tuason said the PSC would spearhead the negotiations between feuding basketball personalities Quinteliano Lital and Gonzalo Puyat II.

He added that while there is a growing perception on government intervention on the PSC's offer, the PSC would still join hands with the POC in resolving the issue to save the country's sagging image in the international sports scene.

Puyat, who agreed to a harmonious meeting with Lital, earlier said he would only sit down on the bargaining table once Tuason excuses himself from the negotiations.

Tuason's presence, Puyat insisted, is tantamount to government intervention.

"I firmly believe that this problem must be solved by basketball people only," said Puyat, who requested Mobile team owner Manny Pangilinan to act as arbiter in the proposed conciliatory meeting.

The meeting was supposed to be held yesterday but Lital was reportedly out of town.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Olympic Committee set no conditions on the conciliatory move between Puyat and Lital to fast-track the lifting of the Fiba suspension.

"There are no preconditions. As long as they sign an accord with my signature it will be enough to lift the suspension," Dayrit told the INQUIRER.

He added: "The POC is ready to accept any arrangement that may be mutually agreed upon by the two groups."

Dayrit was referring to the first of two options being offered by the Fiba for the BAP to regain its membership from the world governing body in the sport.

The Fiba instructed that conflicting parties (Lital and Puyat) should sign a conciliatory letter with the signature of Dayrit affixed and then forward the statement to the Switzerland-based basketball body.

"With the SEA Games fast approaching, they (Puyat and Lital) should act on it immediately," said Dayrit. "What is important now is for the two contending parties to agree to an arrangement that will pave the way for our basketball athletes to compete in the SEA Games."

Dayrit noted the suspension should be lifted before the final submission of entry forms on July 15 for the country to defend its crown in the biennial sportsfest set in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Sept. 8-17.

Confirmation

WINNING the Philippine Open Golf Championship is every Filipino golfer's dream.

Caloy Nival, in his 60s, still rules to this day his failure to win the Open in 1969, when he lost it to Japan's Haruo Yasuda in a playoff.

For years, Frankie Miñoza suffered as the best Filipino golfer never to have won the Open. When he finally nailed it in 1998 at Riviera, he said: "Para akong nabuhutan ng buhay."

Rudy Labares won in 1984 and Mario Manubay in 1986, when foreigners weren't around. Same with Gerardo Rosales when he prevailed last year at Riviera.

But the Open will always be the Open. Its prestige has never waned, whether there's a foreigner competing or not.

Fifty-six men have won the Open since it began in 1913 at the now-extinct Manila Golf Club in Malabon.

The first 16 Opens were won by Americans. Filipino Larry Montes ended American domination when he captured it in 1929. Montes, who died a while back in California, would score 11 more victories—the last in 1954—to become the winningest with 12. Cesario Tugot, who is still very much around, followed with 6, including four straight from 1955. Ben Arda has 3 (1961, 1963 and 1979). Luis "Golem" Siverio (1966), Quintan Mancao (1976) and Robert Pactorin (1990) have one apiece.

Winning the Open is one of the hardest to achieve. In more than 80 editions of the Open, only 13 Filipinos have won it. Happily for us, the last Open was won by a Filipino—Cassius Casas. Just last Sunday.

Oh, yes, Casas.

Once regarded as Miñoza's heir apparent, Casas waited 9 years as a pro before he rode the Open. To do it, he had to reconstruct his backswing flawed by a flying elbow 2 months before the Open, thanks to Bong Lopez. After opening up with a 2-under-par 70 at Wack Wack, Bong knew his reconstruction job had worked.

"I knew at once he'd win," said Bong, a national team member many times over before becoming a national team coach.

Three more sub-par rounds (70-71-70) confirmed Bong's prediction as Casas went on to score a 3-shot victory worth P1.5 million, his biggest paycheck since he turned pro in 1992.

Casas changing his swing is no big deal, really.

Nick Faldo, after winning 2 US Masters titles, changed his swing.

Tiger Woods, after winning the 1997 US Masters, also changed his swing.

But, while Faldo never recovered his winning touch, Woods went on to win the big ones, including a 4 majors of golf in succession. He is now world No. 1.

Casas, 34, will next play in Taiwan. I hope his reconstructed swing holds. Winning the Open is just the start. He needs to confirm the potency of his new-found formula. Taiwan should provide it.

Good luck, Pareng Cas.

JAKE Ayson, the NGAP executive director, has yet to receive his golf set (Munro Astor packed in a Grand Monarch bag), which was accidentally loaded by his caddy in a different car at Wack Wack during the Open Week last week. He can be reached at 525-6967 or 524-5160.

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza



CHAMPAGNE SPLASH

Ralf Schumacher (left) pours champagne on brother Michael after the latter won the French Grand Prix in Magny-Cours, central France, Sunday. Aside from spoiling Ralf's 26th birthday celebration, Michael, 32, also collected the kind of present most F1 drivers can only dream of—a tally of 50 race victories.

Tuason: PSC gesture made for the interest of the country

HIS EFFORTS at trying to help solve the conflict in the Basketball Association of the Philippines misinterpreted as government intervention, Philippine Sports Commission chair Butch Tuason said yesterday that the offer was made "for the good and interest of the country."

"The PSC would like to broker peace discussions with the end view of helping both parties come to an agreement," said Tuason. "This offer, we believe, is purely for the good and interest of the country whose image in the foreign scene continues to suffer even without this conflict."

Gonzalo "Lito" Puyat, who is locked in a bitter fight for the BAP presidency with Quinteliano "Tiny" Lital, has opposed the role of Tuason as a possible mediator to the squabble.

At the same time, Tuason stressed the crucial role of the PSC outside financial matters related to the training of the country's national athletes and



TUASON

sports development.

"It is also the duty of the PSC, being the highest government authority on amateur sports, to protect the interest of the national government," he said.

Tuason also said that the BAP conflict must be resolved before the deadline set by the Fiba for the country's participation in the Southeast Asian Games on July 15.

Should the suspension stay up to the deadline set, the Philippine will face the prospect of having to compete in the SEA Games without a basketball team for the first time since the sport was introduced in the biennial games.

"The scenario of our non-participation in the SEA Games would jeopardize everything we've worked so hard for the past years," said Tuason. "We are one with the nation in hoping for the quick resolution of this problem in the BAP."

8 teams joining Espiritu Cup

EIGHT teams have so far confirmed their participation in the NBC-3rd Danny Espiritu Cup basketball tournament starting on Saturday, July 7, at the Makati Coliseum.

These teams, together with their owners/supporters, are:

University of Manila (lawyer Ernesto delos Santos), Wangs Ball Club (Alex Wang), Philippine Army (Lt. Gen. Jaime delos Santos), Spring Cooking Oil (Tac Padilla), Hub Café Internet (Rey Pamaran), G.P. Maryson (George Palaran), Mapsa

(Mayor Jejomar Binay, Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado and Director Hermie San Miguel) and PCCR (Dr. Eduardo J. Bautista and lawyer Florante M. Senil).

A pre-opening and managers' meeting will be held at 5 p.m. on July 5 at Wild Duck Restaurant along Roxas Boulevard. Other interested teams are invited to attend. For more details, they may nNo. 743-0810; Angelo Penaranda (tel. nos. 851-3109/851-3110) or tournament commissioner Mar Morelos (09-7-9351510).



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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

■ 'Poor' want OIC
Malenzo out
A20

Schools relax ROTC rules



TAKING his turn as mayor of San Juan, JV Ejercito is joined by his mother, Gula Gomez, in the inauguration Mass at the town hall.

JV: Who knows, I might be President

BY AGNES DONATO

THIS EARLY, newly installed San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito has made clear where he hopes to wind up his political career—in Malacañang like his father, deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Taking his oath again, this time at the San Juan town hall, Ejercito noted the parallelisms between his own oath-taking and that of his father's in 1969.

"Not so long ago, I was still in my mother's womb then, my father was elected San Juan mayor," Ejercito said in his inaugural speech yesterday. "Now, three decades later, it is my turn to serve our historic town."

"Who knows? I might just attain someday what my father has reached. I have always hoped to serve not only the people of San Juan but the Filipino masses."

Ejercito, who was named after his father and for being the so-called "victory baby" of his parents, was sworn into office by Justice Andres Reyes Jr., whose father in turn swore in the former

president also as San Juan mayor.

Yesterday, Ejercito was accompanied by his mother, former starlet Gula Gomez, half brother Jojo Ejercito and other relatives when he was sworn in before some 300 municipal hall employees and supporters.

Municipal treasurer Belen Martinez led the symbolic turnover of municipal funds of P270 million.

Ejercito first took his oath of office on Saturday at the Veteran's Memorial Medical Center, where his half-brother, former San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada, and their father are detained on plunder charges.

The former First Lady and now Senator Luisa Ejercito also took her oath at the VMMC on Saturday.

"I find the ceremonies on Saturday to be more significant because my whole family was there," Ejercito said. "While I feel sad my father was not able to see me take my oath here, I think this is for the better. Their (Joseph and Jinggoy Estrada) presence here might only cause security risks."

Three more flyovers for Metro

BY GERALD G. LACUARTA

THE DEPARTMENT of Public Works and Highways yesterday said it is planning to build four more interchanges—three flyovers and an underpass—in Metro Manila to ease traffic.

One of the proposed flyovers would be built over the intersection of Espana and Gov. Forbes beside the University of Sto. Tomas in Sampaloc, Manila.

Lope Adriano, director of the DPWH-Urban Roads Project Office-Project Management Office, said the 650-meter, P450-million flyover along Gov. Forbes would be constructed above the proposed Metro Rail Transit Line 4.

The three other proposed interchanges would be on C-3 (G. Araneta Avenue)/R-7 (Quezon Avenue), C3 (G. Araneta)/B. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, and C-3 (Sgt. Rivera Street)/A. Bonifacio Avenue.

Adriano said the detailed engineering for the four projects will be included in the proposed loan agreement with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) under Phase V of the Metro Manila Interchange Construction Project.

Costing P320 million, the C-3 (G. Araneta)/R-7 (Quezon Avenue) interchange project would involve the construction of a four-lane divided underpass along C-3 Road/Quezon Avenue with an approximate length of 750 meters.

The 650-meter, P380-million C3 (G. Araneta Avenue)/B. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue interchange would be a four-lane divided second level flyover expected to be built within 24 months.

Also expected to rise along C-3 Road is a 600-meter long four-lane divided second level flyover costing P380 million that will cross A. Bonifacio Avenue, a main gateway to the North Luzon Expressway.

Currently under construction is the P393.83 million Edsa-Quezon Avenue interchange which is a three-lane viaduct along Edsa.

The Edsa-Quezon Avenue interchange started in January under a joint venture contract with William Uy Construction Corp., JH Pajara Con-

struction Corp. and Philippine National Construction Corp.

Adriano said the project is expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2002.

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MSD HEALTH NEWS

For many men, hair loss is such a sensitive subject it can only be addressed by someone close, someone he trusts completely. So here are some guide to help you discuss his options with him. Your support may be just what he needs to see his doctor and seek the treatment he already wants.

Facts about male pattern hair loss (MPHL)

In males, thinning of hair may begin at any time after puberty and is not unusual by the late teens. The incidence of baldness increases with age as studied. As a rule of thumb 25% of men aged 25, 40% of men aged 40, and 50% of men aged 50 show evidence of MPHL.¹

The two components of male pattern baldness are bitemporal recession and balding over the vertex (top of the head). Usually the balding starts in the temples and frontal areas and involves the posterior vertex later; occasionally the whole crown is affected by the thinning process from the start. The hair loss process may be gradual and continuous, but is often episodic. As the condition progresses, more of the vertex is involved by the balding process and in the most extreme cases complete balding of the crown can result, with hair remaining only on the back and sides of the scalp.¹

3. Empathize

He might be experiencing a loss that goes beyond the loss of his hair. Try to understand what he may be feeling and be there to support him.

4. Reassure. Help him understand that it is his choice to seek treatment and that you are 100% behind him. You can encourage him to seek medical advice.

5. Enable. If he does not have a regular doctor, give him the name and phone number of a doctor who can advise him.



Facts about medical treatment for MPHL

Because MPHL is a medical condition, there are available medical treatment options for it. Traditional hair loss treatment options range from hair augmentation and replacement, such as hair weaves and toupees, to topical products which are applied to the scalp. Other used remedies to replace hair loss are hair implants or transplants. Today, there is also an oral prescription medicine that has been clinically tested and approved by the US Food and Drug Administration/Philippine Bureau of Food and Drug to stop MPHL and help increase hair growth. Ask your doctor about it.

It is up to you to take the first step

Now that you have the facts take the first step. Talk to him. Hundreds of thousands of women have already helped their partners find the solution to hair loss. Encourage him to see his doctor or see a dermatologist and begin treatment. Chances are he has just been waiting for a signal from you. It is a conversation that could make him feel better about himself.

1. Whiting DA, Howden FL. Androgenetic Alopecia. Color atlas of differential diagnosis of hair loss. Cedar Grove, NJ: Canfield Publishing, 1996: 18-23.

For more information about MPHL, consult a dermatologist or your physician. For other concerns, you may call MSD Customer Call Center at 878-6338. For outside Metro Manila, call (toll-free) 1-800-1-888-5737.



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Help Your Partner Deal With Hair Loss

How you can help

MPHL is such a sensitive subject, many men try to ignore or deny it as long as possible. For some, it is so traumatic it can shake their confidence and undermine their self-esteem, even cause them to question their masculinity. For others, it is a signal of lost youth.

But just because your partner does not talk about MPHL, does not mean it does not bother him. Many men are embarrassed to consult a doctor for fear of seeming vain.

That is why your support is so critical. Your partner trusts you, respects your opinion, and knows you have his best interests at heart. Your encouragement could help him get the successful treatment that can improve his outlook, and yours too.

Five steps to helping him deal with his hair loss

1. **Understand MPHL.** The more you understand about this medical condition, the easier it will be to help him.
2. **Educate.** Explain MPHL and that he can see a doctor about medical treatment options.

QC jail warden relieved over suspect's escape

INTERIOR Secretary Jose Lina yesterday ordered the relief of the Quezon City jail warden and two subordinates after the alleged mastermind in the kidnapping and killing of the son of the late Quezon City Judge Marciano Bacalla escaped Friday afternoon.

Lina also ordered the filing of criminal and administrative charges against jail warden Chief Insp. Alberto Santos and jail guards JOs Luisito Torres and Roderick Sibuna following the escape of suspect Onofre Surut.

The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) replaced Santos with Supt. Primitivo Benitez as Quezon City jail chief.

Surut escaped from the custody of Torres and Sibuna on Friday afternoon at the East Avenue Medical Center, where he was supposed to undergo some medical tests.

The suspect allegedly complained of severe chest pains on Friday afternoon. Chief Insp. Nida Ramos, jail medical officer, recommended that Surut be taken to the EAMC.

Santos apparently approved the suspect's transfer to the hospital for fear that he might die in jail. Surut was taken to the EAMC around 3 p.m. Friday.

Lina said Quezon City jail officials should not have allowed Surut to leave the jail without a court order.

Surut escaped while he was about to have an X-ray. Surut was arrested for his alleged role in the kidnap-slaying of Mark Bacalla on May 2.

The Bacalla family paid ransom money to the suspects who, however, still killed the young Bacalla.

The police rescue operations for Bacalla also led to the killing by mistake of New World Hotel chief steward Fernando Lozada and his daughter's friend, Marian Usan.

Lozada and Usan were killed after police officers fired at their car on May 17 on Aruneta Avenue. The officers mistook Lozada's car for the escape vehicle of the kidnapping suspects.

National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycooco said he has ordered the bureau's National Capital Region Office, headed by lawyer Edmund Arugay, to track down Surut.

Philip C. Tubeta, Jerome Aning

Man kills own brother

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESQUERRA

A MAN on Sunday killed his older brother, said to be a drug addict, for hurting the former's 2-year-old daughter and 58-year-old father in Malabon City, police said.

Police said Glenie Retiz Jr., 21, stabbed to death his brother Ferdinand, 26, in their house on Pilapit Street in Sitio 6, Barangay Catmon at about 8 p.m. Sunday.

Glenie was enraged when his brother Ferdinand, said to be high on drugs, came home and began berating members of his family, said investigator PO2 Redentor Mantala.

Ferdinand slapped Glenie's daughter and threatened to hit their father, Glenie Sr., with a wooden club, Mantala said.

Glenie tried to restrain his brother but the latter only became more violent and charged him to a fight, he investigated. Glenie then chased his brother and stabbed him in the chest and arm.

The suspect remains at large.

'Poor' want OIC Malonzo out

'Asistios paying protesters'

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESQUERRA

HUNDREDS of poor residents of Caloocan City yesterday staged a rally in front of the city hall to pressure President Macapagal-Arroyo into revoking Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo's appointment on Saturday as OIC mayor of the city.

Calling Malonzo an "enemy of the poor," the protesters, led by the 1,500-strong Puwersa ng Walang Wala, said they would organize a massive protest action similar to the so-called Edsa 3 to force Ms Macapagal to reconsider Malonzo's appointment. They also vowed to stay in front of the city hall until Macapagal appoints a new set of OICs.

Malonzo said he was only giving the protesters a chance to cool off and for their emotion to subside.

"Then, we would ask them to leave, especially if they are getting in the way (of official business)," Malonzo said.

He also described the protesters as paid lackeys of his rivals, brothers Macario "Boy" Asistio Jr. and Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio. He said the protesters are receiving P200 a day from the Asistios.

"They (the Asistios) should accept their defeat. They should know that those appointed OICs have the people's mandate," Malonzo said.

The Commission on Elections has suspended the proclamation of winning candidates pending its decision on a petition for an election failure filed

by the Asistios.

Yolanda Crisostomo, spokesperson of PnWW, claimed that the letter appointing Malonzo and other "winning" candidates as OICs could have been faked. She said the letter only had the initials of Ms Macapagal and not her signature.

"We appeal to the President to appoint a new OIC, anybody but Malonzo and his partymates," Crisostomo said.

"The people of Caloocan know very well that Malonzo has made their lives more miserable so he doesn't deserve to be mayor all over again."

She challenged Malonzo to stand in front of the protesters and tell them that he deserves to be the OIC.

Protesters denounced the mayor for his alleged "sins" to the poor.

As early as 8 a.m. yesterday, protesters camped out at the plaza in front of the city hall and staged a program calling for Malonzo's replacement.

Then they marched on the streets urging other poor residents to join their cause.

Some of the protesters accused the media of being biased in favor of Malonzo.

Malacañang has been silent since Malonzo's controversial oath-taking last Saturday.

Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. administered the oath to Malonzo, Vice Mayor Luis Varela and the city's councilors, which included street activist Nathaniel Santiago.



ANTI-MALONZO demonstrators at the Caloocan City Hall, according to Malonzo, should learn to accept defeat. YAL HANDUMON

Was Lacson capable of crime?

THE ALLEGED sins of former Philippine National Police chief Panfilo Lacson will hound him up in the halls of the Senate.

If he has plans of running for president in 2004 he might as well forget it. At the rate accusations against him are surfacing practically every day, he'll have a hard time defending himself at the bar of public opinion.

No matter how he denies the charges the public perception is that he committed the crimes he is accused of. Being found guilty is different from being perceived guilty. The former needs a lot of proof and entails a long legal process; the latter only a modicum of doubt on a person's innocence.

Was Lacson capable of ordering the kidnap-murder of publicist Bobby Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbillo? Was he capable of masterminding the killing of 11 suspected members of the Kuratong Baleleng gang more than six years ago? Was he capable of ordering the assassination of top officials to destabilize the Macapagal-Arroyo administration?

If you asked a former police

reporter who covered Lacson when he was a first lieutenant at the dreaded Metrocom Intelligence and Security Group (MISG) in the late 1970s, he would say, "yes, he's capable of the crimes imputed to him."

That reporter is yours truly.

I covered the MISG for the Times Journal and then the Manila Bulletin from 1977 up to the 1980s. When I was first assigned to the MISG, the most dreaded military unit at the time, Lacson was still a first lieutenant. He was directly under then Capt. Reynaldo Berroya, head of the MISG's police intelligence branch. Both Lacson and Berroya were subordinates of then Lt. Col Rolando Abadilla, the MISG chief.

I saw Lacson's fast promotion from first lieutenant to lieutenant colonel in a span of a few years. A member of Philippine Military Academy Class of 1971, he was the youngest lieutenant colonel in his time. He "flew" from captain to lieutenant colonel. Would you believe he only carried the rank of major—which is between captain and lieutenant colonel—for only a few days?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



I'm ashamed to say it now but when I was covering the MISG, I knew that most of the killings of criminals slain by Lacson's men did not take place in shootouts. Rather, they were shot dead while in captivity.

Then, I rationalized that the executions of those criminals meant that they could no longer do harm to innocent citizens. That's the reason I always wrote that the dead criminals were killed in shootouts as the MISG filed in its after-mission reports.

The following is an example: The Bank of P.I. branch in Cubao, Quezon City was held up by several armed men in 1978 (if memory serves). To cut the story short, the captured robbers who were not killed at the bank after they surrendered were taken to the

MISG headquarters in Camp Crame.

I was gathering data on the number of robbers who were killed and captured at the Metrocom Investigation Unit (MIU), headed by then Maj. Leandro Mendoza, when there was a call for me.

"Mon, what's your number of suspects killed in the shootout with MISG operatives?" asked the voice at the other end of the line. It was Lacson who was calling from his office at the MISG which was directly behind the MIU building.

If I'm not mistaken I said I had four dead suspects, citing records from that MIU. Lacson said, "Make it five."

And then a shot rang out. It came from the MISG headquarters. Lacson gave me the name of the fifth slain bank robbery suspect.

In the military, they say that a good leader is also a good follower. Lacson was an excellent subordinate. He followed orders from his superiors without question.

Lacson's superior at the MISG, the military unit that molded him, was Colonel Abadi. Abadi was notorious for his ruthlessness toward

criminals and allegedly even toward innocent citizens who crossed him.

Since Lacson was a good subordinate he naturally chose people who followed his orders blindly when he was chief of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF).

Looking back to the time Lacson, as PNP chief, was very sparing in issuing permits for citizens to carry firearms outside of their residences, I can guess the reason why he did that.

Lacson didn't want law-abiding citizens to carry guns because he didn't want to give them the wherewithal to fight criminals.

And from what we're now hearing about the PAOCTF, the criminals were Lacson's men.

He didn't want law-abiding citizens to shoot back when criminal PAOCTF agents shot at them.

Look what happened to Dacer. If Dacer had a gun and knew how to use it, those PAOCTF agents who abducted him would have had second thoughts.

Sta. Cruz church robbed of antique



Tuesday, July 3, 2001
St. Thomas, Apostolic

1st Reading:

Gospel:

Thomas, the Twin, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he replied, "Until I have seen in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

Eight days later, the disciples were inside again and Thomas was with them. Despite the locked doors Jesus came and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands; stretch out your hand and put it into my side. Resist no longer and be a believer."

Thomas then said, "You are my Lord and my God." Jesus replied, "You believe because you see me, don't you? Happy are those who have not seen and believe."

Commentary

John describes in his gospel the love story of God with his people that is to culminate in the wedding of God and people at the fullness of time. This marriage actually took place when Jesus demonstrated his love for the people to the very end on the cross, and was ratified by the resurrection. The signs of this ultimate love are the wounds in the side and in the hands and feet of the Risen Lord, Thomas, the beloved disciple, had the privilege of verifying these signs. Once he saw the signs, he exclaimed: "My Lord and my God! In other words: It is true! God had married his people! Since this realization is based on faith, Jesus blesses the people who rely on faith rather than on seeing.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the love of Jesus up to the very end. We ask you, grant that we may love one another just as he loved us.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

JUDICIAL ETHICS—Attitude of judge towards litigants—Respondent judge need not be remanded that government service is people-oriented. Patience is an essential part of dispensing justice and courtesy is a mark of culture and good breeding. Belligerent behavior has no place in government service where personnel are enjoined to act with self-restraint and civility at all times even when confronted with rudeness and insolence. (Reference: Rule 3.04 of the Code of Judicial Conduct) [Citations omitted] [Justice Ynares-Santiago, First Division, *Calles v. Castigador*, G.R. No. 139844, December 15, 2000]

DIGEST BY R.E. VERA

THE CURATE of the Espiritu Santo Parish in Sta. Cruz, Manila yesterday appealed to the culprits who stole the antique monstrance from the parish church's adoration chapel over the weekend to return the religious item.

Msr. Alberto Salonga Jr. said he and church workers discovered the theft of the golden monstrance—a vessel used in exposing the consecrated Host to worshippers—before the start of the 5:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday.

The loss of the item was quickly reported to the nearby Western Police District Station 3.

The parish priest said he is offering a P5,000 reward to anyone who has information leading to the recovery of the monstrance.

Jerome Aning

Tofil 2001

THE ANNUAL search for The Outstanding Filipino (Tofil) is ongoing.

The Tofil Award is given to outstanding Filipino men and women, who are at least 41 years old and who have made significant contributions to the upliftment of their profession and to national development.

Since 1988, its sponsors, Insular Life Assurance Co. Ltd. and the Philippine Jaycee Senate, have honored 66 outstanding Filipinos in various fields.

Any individual, public or private entity or organization may nominate candidates in agriculture, arts and culture, business and industry, community/humanitarian services, religious work, environment, education, finance, government/public service, justice/law, labor, medicine, literature, media, military/police work, science & technology, sports, and peace advocacy.

Nominations are accepted at all Jaycees Senate chapter offices and Insular Life field offices nationwide.

Deadline for submission of nomination forms is Aug. 31, 2001. Call P/S Secretariat at 373-4390 or the Insular Life head office at 771-1818 extension 1121, 1122 or 1123.

4 bombs caused Parañaque fire

BY ALCUIN PAPA

FOUR homemade bombs were said to have set off the fire that hit Parañaque City Hall on Thursday, police said yesterday.

Based on an initial report sent to Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez, the bombs were homemade but very sophisticated.

Police said the bombing might have something to do with Marquez's controversial win in the last elections.

Supporters of losing candidate Pablo Olivares had been picketing city hall grounds to protest the victory of Marquez, whom they accused of widespread cheating.

The report did not specify if the bombing was part of a "destabilization" plot against the local administration or an "assassination" attempt on Marquez.

Atienza unhappy over anti-rob drive

BY JEROME ANING

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza yesterday expressed displeasure over the acting Western Police District director's performance in the anti-robbery campaign.

"You cannot just wait for victims to report a crime before you act," Atienza told Senior Supt. Nicolas Pasinos Jr., the acting WPD chief.

"You have to take a proactive stance and go after these criminal groups. Prevention is the key."

The mayor expressed particular concern over the cases of car thefts and holdup, particularly in the city's Malate, Ermita and Quiapo districts, that took place during the weekend.

Saturday afternoon, overseas contract worker Gumar Tamar, 37,

lost P20,000 cash to four armed men who held him up on P. Casal Street in San Miguel, Quiapo.

Sunday morning, two employees of the Philamlife insurance firm were robbed of P19,000 at the corner of United Nations and Taft avenues.

Friday evening, journalist-lawyer Reden Viage of the Manila Bulletin was victimized by a "bukar-kolae" gang in front of the Century Park Sheraton Hotel in Malate.

Viage said his Land Rover, which he parked in front of the hotel, was forcibly opened. He said he lost, among others, a leather valise, car stereo and other personal items.

Earlier in the morning, a female member of the hotel's gymnasium was held up at knife-point. Two

investigators have pinned the blame on arsonists and invited four persons for questioning. The suspects were later released for lack of evidence.

Tension ran high in Parañaque yesterday when supporters of Olivares stormed city hall to protest the swearing in of city officials by Marquez.

Two of the protesters were later arrested for allegedly causing a commotion. They were identified as Melchor Santos of San Donisio, Parañaque and Rodrigo Opelada of Olivares Compound, Parañaque. The two are now detained at the city jail.

The mayor's media coordinator Lane Afable said Marquez took his oath of office sometime last week before Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

cases of jeepney robbery in Ermita were reported on Saturday.

Atienza called the string of robberies "unacceptable" and said City Hall's program to revive Manila "would be severely affected by incidents like these because it is predicated on the assurance that citizens can walk (on) our streets anytime without fear of being victimized by criminal elements."

He told Pasinos to deploy more police teams, especially in "high-risk" areas, to augment the regular police mobile and foot patrols.

"I want substantial results, the sooner the better," Atienza told the police colonel. "We have to maintain at all costs the high degree of public confidence in our police force that we have been trying to develop over the past few years."

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DOLLYWOOD

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2. HEAD OVER HEELS	2. HEAD OVER HEELS
3. ACCIDENTAL SPY	3. ACCIDENTAL SPY
4. PEARL HARBOR	4. PEARL HARBOR
5. TOMB RAIDER	5. TOMB RAIDER
6. EVOLUTION	6. EVOLUTION
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8. MILA	8. MILA
9. LUV TEXT	9. LUV TEXT
10. EVOLUTION	10. EVOLUTION
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BUSINESS

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Peso hits 5-month low at 52.70 to \$1

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

A DEARTH of positive news coupled with a slow dollar inflow and aggressive buying yesterday pushed the peso down by more than 30 centavos to a five-month low of 52.70 to \$1.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas still refused to intervene and sell dollars in the market even as it stressed that transactions were being observed for any sign of speculation.

"We are monitoring to see if there was any speculation. So far, we think the weakness was due to quarter-end demand and also the Abu Sayyaf and the kidnappings," Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

Bangko Sentral Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said

a maturing obligation of an oil company was instrumental in pushing demand up and forced some firms to buy foreign exchange at a high of P52.73 to \$1.

Tetangco said the market was anticipating the entry of \$500 million to \$600 million from a telecommunications company. Market sources believed it could be the proceeds of a planned bond float of PLDT.

The peso opened at 52.50 to \$1, already weaker than last Friday's level of 52.395. Traders said the peso may lose 10 to 20 centavos in the coming days.

Deputy National Treasurer Eduardo Mendiola also blamed the peso's weakness yesterday for the lackluster auction of treasury bills. He said banks appeared to be shifting part of their liquidity

to the foreign exchange market rather than using these funds to buy government securities.

As a result, bids for longer-term instruments were lower than what the Treasury normally offers.

Buenaventura said the slight uptick in the 91-day treasury bill yields was expected after the BSP had kept overnight rates steady last Thursday.

The benchmark rate went up by 4.2 basis points to 8.77 percent while the six-month and one-year instruments rose by 16.2 basis points and 12.9 points to 9.942 percent and 11.221 percent.

"The rates of longer term instruments went up because of fears that the government's deficit may go up," the BSP chief said.

Had the Treasury accepted all

bids for the six-month and one-year debt papers, the 182-day treasury bill rate would have gone up by 40 basis points to 10.5 percent and the 364-day by 27 basis points to 11.625 percent.

The central bank governor said he had abandoned his optimistic stance on the peso and said "rates will be sticky for a while."

Buenaventura said the central bank was prepared to intervene in the market when necessary. "We had said we could come in anytime so the market had been waiting for it. But so far, we haven't intervened."

He said that while the recent peso weakness had slowed down dollar remittance from exports and overseas contract workers, there had been no signs of capital flight.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR

Peso-Dollar Rate

P 52.70 = \$1

As of 5 p.m., July 2, 2001

Y 124.64 = \$1

The US dollar was trading at 124.64 as of 5 p.m., July 2, 2001

GOLD-\$269.60/770.10

per ounce Hong Kong, June 29, 2001

STOCK MARKET

Shares end down

STOCKS extended their decline for the eighth straight session on Monday, as the falling peso and gloomy economic prospects triggered selling by foreign investors.

"What's the incentive to buy into the market? The Philippines continued to be plagued by economic and political problems," said A&A Securities research head Astrolito del Castillo.

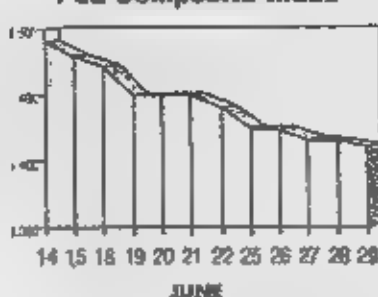
"If you look at it, there's no positive news to perk up the market. There's a sudden barrage of negative developments," said Manny Cruz of Mark Securities.

"The weaker peso, the pressure on interest rates and the hostage crisis all had their expected impact on the market," added Roberto Cano of BPI Securities Corp.

The Philippine main index closed down 14.28 points, or 1.01 percent, at 1,395.79 points. The Philippine stock market now ranks as the seventh worst performing market in the region.

Decliners outclassed gainers 34 to 20 and there were 47 stocks unchanged on volume of P543.11 million.

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B8)

Gov't urged to resolve 'old' issues

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

BUSINESSMEN yesterday urged the fledgling Macapagal administration to give priority to resolving old issues—mainly lack of credit, rising costs, unabated smuggling, inefficient bureaucracy, and worsening internal security problem—that hounded the previous government.

They claimed that solving these problems had become more compelling with the sub-par performance of the industry sector due to a slowdown in the country's top export markets (United States and

GOVT/B2



ONGPIN

Ongpin group takes over mining company

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE GROUP of former trade minister Roberto Ongpin is taking over another mining firm, Hogon Suyoc Mines Inc. (ISMI), from the Ortigas family.

Similar to Ongpin's technology upstart Philweb Com Inc (Philweb), ISMI, one of the country's oldest mining firms, will sell its mining operations and transform itself into an information technology company.

Philweb signed yesterday a memorandum of agreement with ISMI wherein the former would subscribe to 12 billion unissued shares of ISMI's authorized capital

stock at a par value of one centavo each.

This will bring ISMI's subscribed shares to 30 billion, giving Ongpin's group an initial 40-percent control of the company, Philweb spokesperson Roberto San Jose said.

But the disclosure said ISMI had already agreed to allow new investors to have majority control, and management of ISMI to implement its shift to an IT company. San Jose said ISMI would change its business thrust to IT, media, telecommunications or similar industry and negotiate with investors who would infuse the necessary capital or assets.

ONGPIN/B2

RP readies \$500-M bond flotation

FOREIGN investment banks have convinced the Macapagal administration to consider issuing at least \$500 million in global bonds during a roadshow slated either late this month or in September.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said favorable foreign market conditions were making the national government re-think its earlier stance of pursuing a strictly no-deal roadshow in July or September.

Camacho said recent developments might convince the administration to shift to a deal, roadshow even if the government has completed its foreign financing requirements following a series of private placements that would reach about \$550 million by the end of this month.

The option was to reduce the volume of domestic borrowings and load part of the needs on the offshore fund-raising exercise. Camacho said part of the financing requirements for next year might be front-loaded as well.

"Banks helping us on the roadshow are telling us we could get attractive rates because of a lack of emerging market issues as well as a generally positive feeling toward the Philippines," the finance chief said.

Part of the lure, Camacho added, was the probability that the government could issue a longer tenor borrowing, possibly maturing in 10 years, with a reasonable price.

He said an eight- to 10-year bond carries a spread of about five percentage points over the six-month London interbank offered rate or Libor.

"A bond issue must have an economic size and \$500 million is a good size. If we do it, the tenor must be at least 10 years and it should be a global bond," the finance chief said.

He said a longer tenor was important especially at a time when the country's maturity profile was starting to bunch up. The recent borrowings of the national government and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas were to mature in three to five years.

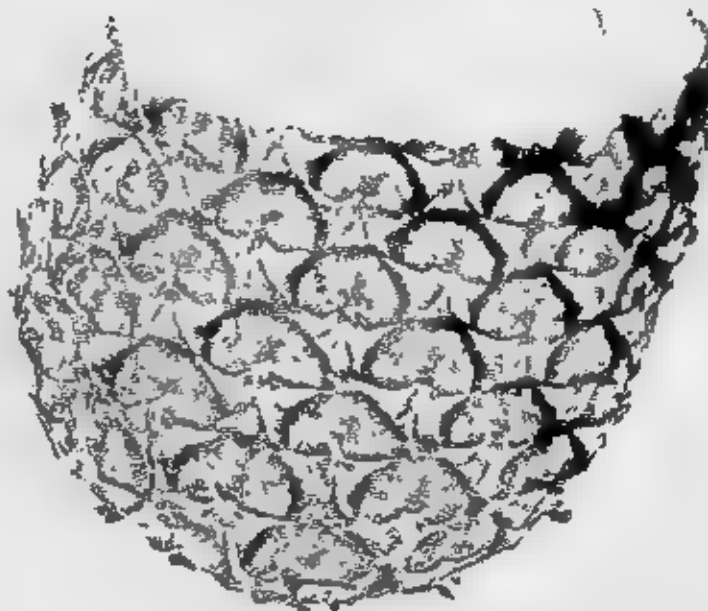
"It is a good thing to start looking at longer term maturities. Also, if we convert domestic borrowings to foreign, we would not crowd out the private sector," Camacho said.

The roadshow is being arranged by seven foreign investment banks led by Morgan Stanley

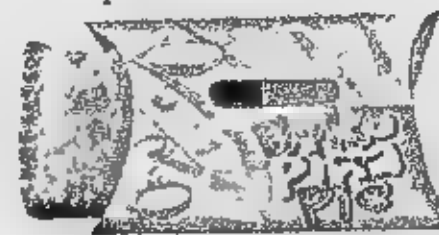
RP/B2



CAMACHO



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Start the bull ruling

THIS cute administration of Gloriaeta just hit pay dirt. Times are hard as they are, but on top of it, at least based on word going around business, a third force now also wishes Gloriaeta ill. They are the so-called Edsa Puwera. You know -- "echapwera".

As you know, unless you spent the whole of last week cleaning your nose, the Palace is busy promoting this old refashioned line about destabilization. This allegedly features very influential people with very sick minds.

They supposedly come from the opposition. Nowadays, another way of saying "opposition" is, well, all those stupid plotters actually follow orders coming from a government hospital with a golf course.

And that means none other than the man named Band... Wrist Band. Let's say all that is true. So what do the plotters hope to gain? Sleep-overs with Wrist Band in the hospital and free enemies in the morning?

It is said they actually want to take over power from Gloriaeta. At this time? I don't think so. Those who think that lightning can strike twice, must really be very optimistic. Thus, or they have damaged brains which were fixed with ducting tape.

IN business, nevertheless, they are saying that Gloriaeta should only expect the opposition to do a lot of opposing. What else can they do? By definition, members of the opposition have nothing better to do. That's why they are involved in politics.

In reality, the concern of this cute administration must have something to do with 2004. That's only three years away! Everybody is preparing. Just ask those Forbes Park groups endorsing, openly, Senators Sergio Osmeña III and Lloren Legarda.

Among them are the so-called Edsa Puwera. They were the same forces which helped Gloriaeta gain power. The only problem is, well, they didn't get some of it for themselves. And so they have to try again and have their candidate win in 2004.

Of course, for their candidate to have a chance against an "incumbent," Gloriaeta must become the very model of incompetence, failure and bad temper. This is the kind of destabilization which worries business. Nobody may help her administration anymore.

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III



As for the opposition, they can only be expected to pounce on Gloriaeta, personally, and the failure of this cute administration to perk up the economy pronto. It's the role of the opposition. Otherwise, they can just go sell recycled condom.

MAYBE you also heard what happened to former House Speaker and soon-to-be House Speaker again Jose de Venecia. It seems the poor man got a number of calls from some bigtime businessmen, asking whether he got the money. What money?

In anything which has even just a tiny trace of the word "congressman," you need money. Quick, thank of "pork," what word comes to mind? That's what I mean.

So when Yoda Venecia decided to seek the speakership again, for a rare record of three terms, it seems somebody went around corporate offices to get contributions for and in behalf of Yoda. The money never reached the poor man.

Despite his suffering such a special kind of daytime robbery, Yoda has the numbers to win the speakership. Well, even kopsidedly! So confident is his group about their getting the position, they even prepared an economic plan. Written pa ngal!

Typically Yoda, the plan even uses the usual catch word. It's called "747." It targets 7 percent growth for seven years. Why the number "7"? The plan says we need to grow that much that long to eradicate poverty. Yeah? Not for luck?

AT least Yoda has a plan, fantastic as it may sound.

We can't say the same thing for somebody. Sure, it looks like an ambitious plan, given that we are growing at a dizzying rate for a small that just had a vertigo attack.

And Yoda's 747 talks of a strategy. It will not wait for these bad times to turn worse. In other words, it wants the government itself to invest to start the economic ball rolling.

Thus the plan offers a way out of this vicious cycle of a sluggish economy which discourages investments which, in turn, leads to an even more sluggish economy which can only discourage investments all the more.

The plan notes that the government has more than \$10 billion in unused cheap credit lines abroad, the so-called ODAs, or official development assistance. They are almost the pay-when-able type of loans. And we don't use them!

The problem is, according to the 747, the government could not provide the counterpart funding for those loans. Why? Because the funding became low priority in the budget. Yoda's 747 promises to change all that. Let's see.

SO the big three oil companies are at it again. One of them just raised pump prices of fuel. Before you know it, by a weird twist of fate, the two others are doing the same thing. Of course not a single word was said about it between them. It's an accident of timing.

Such a bull now rules the much lauded oil deregulation. And it's just one beauty of the program. Another beauty is, well, it allows the big three to make it hard for the new comers to put up gas stations to compete against theirs. Nice, no?

In Cavite, for instance, the new players are prevented -- and by law, at that -- to put up gas stations within a four kilometer radius from an existing station. Guess what stations are existing. Hint: Big.

For some places like Cavite, a ban of four-kilometer radius means it's no longer viable for the new players to go into business there. It means you have to put up a station so far into the outskirts of town, you have to take a flight to go to the toilet.

Metro Pacific to give out Nenaco shares as dividends

By DORIS C. DUMLAO

PROPERTY developer Metro Pacific Corp. is set to unload its 87-percent stake in bleeding shipping firm Negros Navigation Co. by transferring the Nenaco shares to its stockholders.

Instead of rushing to sell Nenaco, MPC said in a statement yesterday that it would dispose of its equity interest in the shipping firm by distributing these as dividends to its shareholders.

With the transaction, MPC will thus be able to take out Nenaco from its balance sheet, as the shipping firm will cease to be a subsidiary.

"The dividend distribution, which will be effected upon completion of the pending capital restructuring of Nenaco, will further position MPC as a company focused on real estate and property development," the statement said.

The capital restructuring will increase the shares held by MPC, which originally owned only 55 percent of Nenaco when it bought into the shipping firm in 1998, to 87 percent of total equity.

This developed after MPC agreed to wipe out Nenaco's total debts amounting to P1.7 billion as part of the financial restructuring of the shipping company. Aside from cleaning up its balance sheet, MPC also earlier earmarked P1 billion in fresh capital for Nenaco.

"We've said that we're trying to focus MPC into

becoming a premier property development and holding company. We have only three kinds of assets, property and then we have First cBank and then Nenaco," MPC president Ricardo Pascua said.

Pascua said management convinced the shareholders and the board of MPC to dispose of the shares in the form of dividends. He noted that it was the best time to do so since Nenaco has begun to see improvements in cash flow.

"Nenaco has been largely rehabilitated. We've strengthened management and we've managed to convince the government that shipping companies can't survive with very low (fare) rates. We've modernized some of its facilities and completed the organizational restructuring and the early retirement and redundancy package has been completed without union trouble," Pascua said.

Most of the commitments made by management to strengthen Nenaco had been fulfilled, Pascua stressed.

MPC has long been planning to divest its controlling stake in Nenaco but has not been able to close any deal due to the poor prospects of the shipping sector. It has tapped British bank HSBC Corp. as the financial adviser to undertake its rehabilitation.

Nenaco provides integrated services in shipping, trucking, warehousing, forwarding and delivery of bulk and break-bulk cargoes.



PASCUA

Ongpin group...

(From page B1)

sets for the project.

He added that at ISMI's next stockholders' meeting, Ongpin would be elected chair while two of his people in Philweb, Jaime Gonzales and Alex Villamar, would be elected directors. Villamar is president of Philweb.

Philweb itself used to be a mining company named South Seas and Natural Resources Inc. before Ongpin's group took over in early 2000. It was then transformed into an IT company. Under the deal, Philweb would manage the transformation of ISMI into another IT company.

The price of ISMI shares has been sharply rising at the Philippine Stock Exchange during the last few weeks on rumors that it would be used as a backdoor listing vehicle. There were also speculations that the group of businessman Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco would eventually buy into the company.

Gov't urged...

(From page B1)

Japan), the lingering political turmoil, the ballooning budget deficit and the continued decline of the country's competitiveness compared with that of its neighbors.

Businessmen and government agencies led by the Department of Trade and Industry held their mid-year consultation to discuss the pressing issues that the industry sector wanted President Macapagal to address in her state-of-the-nation address in Congress this month. The meeting was organized by the Asian Institute of Management and Ramon V. del Rosario for Corporate Social Responsibility.

The business groups, led by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Philippines Industries, said these issues should be addressed to "arrest the looming slowdown and save businesses from closure."

The industry sector grew by a measly 0.1 percent in the first quarter this year from 4.4 percent last year due to sluggish performance in mining, construction and manufacturing.

Businessmen asked the President to encourage

banks to lend more rather than invest their funds in fixed-income securities and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to relax its prudent measures to allow distressed companies to restructure their loans. They urged the government to go overseas for its financing requirements to avoid crowding out local borrowers.

To reduce the cost of doing business in the country, the business groups called for the reduction of tariffs on basic inputs to zero percent; fast-track the privatization of National Power Corp., and expedite the implementation of high-impact infrastructure projects.

In stopping smuggling and unfair trade practices, the businessmen asked the government to close 700 of the 1,000 bonded warehouses that have been inactive as well as all duty-free shops outside the international ports.

The government should also impose deadlines to the processing of business licenses and permits to hasten their review while all agencies should implement their computerization plans.

The businessmen have pledged their full support to the drastic measures to be taken by President Macapagal, including a revamp in the agencies concerned, to resolve the crisis and restore peace and order.

RP readies \$500-M...

(From page B1)

Dean Witter and JP Morgan Chase. Other members of the team are Credit Suisse First Boston, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, ING Barings, and Nomura Securities.

The economic team to be led by Camacho, a former country manager of Deutsche Bank, would meet with investors and creditors in the United States, Europe, and Asia to report on the recent achievements of the Macapagal administration.

The investment banks were supposed to handle the roadshow for free. But with a potential bond deal

in the package, the banks are to get their usual fees and commissions.

Three of the seven participating banks, however, have already cornered a portion of the \$550 million in borrowings arranged by the national government since last month.

Credit Suisse was given a mandate for a \$200-million, three-year private placement. JP Morgan would handle a similar \$100-million facility and HSBC would forge a similar deal for \$250 million this month.

DISCLOSURES

METRO Pacific Corp. has declared its entire interest in Negros Navigation Co. Inc. as property dividend in favor of stockholders of record as of July 16.

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. has declared a cash dividend of P0.50 per share on its Series "A," "I," "R," "W," "AA," "10-percent cumulative convertible preferred stock in favor of stockholders of record as of July 26 and shall be payable on Aug. 31. Also declared were cash dividends of P0.0027 per share per day on its Series BB 10-percent cumulative convertible preferred stock and P0.051944 per share per day on its Series V convertible preferred stock. Payment for Series BB shares shall be on Aug. 31 for stockholders as of July 26 while payment for Series V shall be on July 15 for stockholders as of June 30. Elected directors of the company were Antonio Cojuangco, Helen Dee, Ray Espinosa, Teodoro Locsin Jr., Vitaliano Nolasco II, Napoleon Nazareno, Bienvenido Nebres, Manuel Pangilinan, Albert del Rosario, Pedro Roxas, Taketo Suzuki, Mitsuhiko Takase and Ricardo Zarate.

ELECTED directors of Jardine Davies Inc. were Timothy Bennett, Aloysius Colayco, Bi Yong Chungunco, Catherine Manahan, Anthony Nightingale, James Riley and Geoffrey Thomas.

ELECTED directors of Onico Corp. were Fernando Chua, Tommy Kin Hing Tin, Philip King, Felicissimo Feria, Antonio Evangelista, Reyaldito Guevara, Hermenegildo Capuchino, Lincoln Tan Jr., Wilfredo Sanchez, Nelson Co and Juana Lourdes Buysan.

ELECTED directors of Pryce Corp. were Salvador Escano, Josefin Fraga, Jacques Yves Dupasquier, Antonio Escano, Rafael Escano, David Go, Daniel Mijares, Evelyn Singson, Mario Sinos, Sigurd Sperband and Fernando Trinidad.

ELECTED directors of Vitarich Corp. were Rogelio Sarmiento, Amador Escobar, Lorenzo Sarmiento Jr., Lydia Enrie, Jose Sarmiento, Socorro Gaimanina, Victoria Sarmiento, Senen Bacani, Benjamin Sarmiento Jr., Lamberto Villena and Eligio Labog Jr.

ELECTED directors of Pilep Resources Inc. were Leonardo Siguan-Reyna, Joost Pekkelaing, Teodoro Bernardino, Eleonore Gutierrez, Roberto Atendido, Michael Bernardino, Ramon Mostano, Ramon Ang, Pedrito Aragon, Louis Coson and Alfonso Cruz Jr.

SOLID Group Inc. purchased 2.47 million of its shares at P0.50 per share. Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Philippine Stock Exchange

STOCKS	(As of Monday, July 2, 2001)				CLOSE	VOLUME
	OPEN	HIGH	LOW			
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES						
BANKS						
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5	5	4.9	5	136,000	
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	100	100	100	100	1,000	
Bank of the Phil. Islands	72.5	72.5	70	70	516,800	
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	36.5	37	34	34	160,000	
First E-Bank Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	5,000	
Global Business Bank Inc.	84	85	84	85	718,100	
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	205	207	199	200	220,800	
Philippine National Bank	43.5	44	43.5	44	37,700	
Security Bank Corp.	21	21.25	20	21	37,100	
Union Bank of the Phil.	28	28	28	28	10,000	
FINANCIAL SERVICE						
Filinvest Fund Inc	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000	
First Metro Invest. Corp.	250	250	240	248	460	
Manulife Financial Corp.	1385	1415	1385	1415	8,240	
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1190	1220	1190	1220	34,760	

DECEPTION

Philcemcor stimulating import surge-PCA

By GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

THE PHILIPPINE Constructors Association Inc. has accused local cement manufacturers of stimulating a surge in cement imports from Indonesia to bolster their case against Taiwan Cement Corp.

PCA president Justo Manalo said the local cement industry engaged in a "cooperative strategic effort to contrive an import surge in cement" to force the government's hand in

slapping punitive tariff measures or import quotas to increase prices.

In a letter to Philippine Cement Manufacturers Corp. president Magdaleno Albarracin, Manalo said the massive cement imports from Indonesia came from factories controlled by parent companies of local cement players.

Manalo, however, did not name the culprits.

The "Big 4" cement players of the world—the Holderbank group

of Switzerland, Mexico's Cemex, Lafarge of France and UK firm Blue Circle—have controlled more than 80 percent of the local market through mergers and acquisitions over the last 3 years.

Last month, Philcemcor reported that cement imports had doubled their market share from 10 percent last year to more than 20 percent this year due to alleged dumping or sale of cement below market price.

Philcemcor noted that Indonesia

had emerged as a major source of cement imports by surpassing Taiwan's shipments last month.

Manalo said while the PCA took a "non-belligerent" position on the industry's recent across-the-board 30-percent increase in prices, it would take a "hard-line position" against Philcemcor's move to impose anti-dumping duties on Taiwan cement under the Safeguard Measures Act.

The Department of Trade and

Industry is currently holding a preliminary investigation on Philcemcor's allegation that Taiwan is dumping its excess capacity into the country, which has kept cement prices below production levels.

Manalo claimed that this deceptive move was meant to push prices of cement to more than P200 per bag from P134 per bag to enable the foreign cement companies to recover their acquisition costs in 1998.

He said local cement firms were selling cement at P134 per bag or \$67 per ton, which was substantially bigger than the worldwide average of \$16 to \$20 per ton cost of cement.

Manalo warned that if the DTI sided with Philcemcor on the issue and impose a 40-percent duty on imported cement, cement prices would rise to P200 per bag, which "is inimical to the interest of Filipino consumers and the economy."

Former investment banker to head new energy agency

By RONNEL W. DOMINGO

ENERGY Secretary Vince Perez announced yesterday the appointment of investment banker Edgardo del Fonso as president of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm).

Before his appointment, Del Fonso was managing director of Bancomerco Investment Corp., president of Belle Jai Alai Corp. and chair of Systems Convergence.

The Harvard University graduate was also director of several corporations.

As head of Psalm, Del Fonso will manage the sale and privatization of National Power Corp.'s power generating assets, real estate and other disposable assets, as well as its contracts with independent power producers.

As mandated by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, Psalm will also assume the state firm's outstanding financial obligations that arose from loans, bonds, securities and other forms of debts.

Before joining Bancomerco, Del Fonso also served as chief financial officer of Philippine Airlines and then of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

From 1986 to 1988, he was a finance

undersecretary who headed the technical committee on privatization.

Moreover, the Makati Business Club member held different positions in the Philippine National Oil Co.

In a related matter, Asiselo Gonzaga, Napocor executive vice president and chief operating officer, was appointed president of National Transmission Corp.

Gonzaga had been with Napocor since 1965 where he rose from the ranks starting as a cadet engineer at the Ma. Cristina Hydro Electric Plant.

Last week, Perez said Transco should be the first on the auction block before Napocor's generating assets.

"I think it will make the generation companies' sale attractive if the buyers know who will manage the Transco," he said.

For his part, Gonzaga said the government should chalk up at most \$2.7 billion from the sale of Transco.

He said this was a working target although "it will depend on the prospective buyers who would surely bargain."

He added that the government might either sell Transco outright or enter into a 25-year concession contract.

Transco has yet to be transferred to Psalm.

Metro Pacific sets plan to cut debts

By DORIS C. DUMLAO

PROPERTY developer Metro Pacific Corp. is embarking on a comprehensive strategy to trim its P10.5-billion outstanding debts.

This developed as market analysts said restructuring debts would be the company's biggest challenge this year.

In a news briefing yesterday, Metro Pacific president Ricardo Pascua said a portion of the proceeds from the sale of its stake in the northern central business district of the Bonifacio Global City would be used to pay the

company's debts.

Pascua said Metro Pacific had hoped to bid out the property, consisting of 18.9 hectares of land, by September. The sale would allow Metro Pacific to free up more resources for the development of the rest of the global city.

"A lot of our debt is maturing in the next 12 months, so we're now talking to creditors and undertaking identification of assets," Pascua said.

"There are enough assets to be able to handle the debts. It's just that we have to restructure, sell assets and liquidate so that the debt

structure is matched by assets," he said.

Last week, Metro Pacific announced that its subsidiary, Bonifacio Land Corp., was selling its development rights in the northern central business district to sustain earlier developments in the Global City.

Under the strategy, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., the joint venture between Bonifacio Land and state-controlled Bases Conversion Development Authority will inject the 18.9-hectare property into a new company in exchange for shares. Bonifacio Land

will then sell its 55-percent stake in the new company to a new investor.

Pascua said at least one big local property developer had expressed interest to bid for the stake.

The other groups that participated in the 1993

bidding for the Fort Bonifacio project were expected to take a look at the sale. These included the Ayala, Gokongwei and Sy groups, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Retirement Service and Benefits System.

Gov't unlikely to meet growth targets, says Landbank prexy

By CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE HEAD of Land Bank of the Philippines said yesterday the government was unlikely to meet its growth targets this year.

Landbank president Margarito Teves, an economist and a former lawmaker, predicted a 2.6- to 3-percent growth in gross domestic product—the total final value of all goods and services produced in a nation's economy over a given period of time, usually a year, excluding foreign income—this year.

The GDP growth rate is a primary indicator of the state of a country's economy.

The Development Budget Coordinating Council expects GDP to grow by 3.3 to 3.8 percent this year, a level that economists and analysts believe to be "too optimistic."

"The government poses targets and this is what it wants to attain, while economists do forecasts and these are likely to happen," Teves, former head of a Think Tank Inc., told reporters.

Teves said among the spoilers to the government's growth targets were higher oil prices,

a bigger unemployment figure and a huge fiscal deficit. These, he said, could prevent a sustained economic recovery.

He added that foreign investors remained wary of placing their money in the Philippines.

Teves said the Macapagal administration was struggling with domestic and external problems that were weighing down on the economy.

"(Former President Joseph) Estrada was even luckier because, even if there was a huge deficit, he had no external factors, like a US economic slowdown, to contend with," he said.

The Macapagal administration is also dealing with a huge budget deficit. It has been working on a tight budget to keep its deficit below P145 billion by year's end.

The tighter budget has prevented the government from pump-priming the economy.

The new administration is also coping with an economic slowdown in the United States and Japan, the country's major trading partners.

The United States and Japan account for nearly half the Philippines' exports that, in turn, make up about 20 percent of GDP.



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NTC to tighten rules vs oversubscription

By ABIGAIL L. HO

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission has decided to apply tougher measures to prevent telecommunication companies from taking in subscribers beyond their networks' capacity.

NTC chief Eliseo Rio said the commission was revising its benchmark for the "grade of service" that telecommunication companies should meet.

"Grade of service" is determined by the number of successful calls, or calls that actually make it through to the other party without getting dropped or getting a busy signal.

The benchmark is currently pegged at 7 percent for mobile phone companies and 5 percent for landline operators. This means that out of 100 calls made through a cellular phone, only seven should fail; for each 100 calls made through a landline, only five should fail.

Rio said the NTC would retain its

current landline benchmark, but would set a new benchmark of only 5 percent for cellular phone operators, especially with the rapid subscriber base growth mobile phone firms were enjoying.

"The telecommunications companies have agreed on this already. We'll have one last meeting by mid-July to finalize things," Rio said.

As for how this grade of service was actually measured, Rio said the NTC was conducting quarterly check-ups of each telecommunication company.

"We have our own equipment for measuring this. We get the statistics on how many per one thousand calls give a busy signal," he said.

The next inspection will be done as soon as the new benchmark is set.

Companies that do not meet the NTC's benchmark will be banned from selling additional SIM (subscriber identification module) packs or from getting more subscribers until they improve their grade of service.

SEC seeks credit ring agreement this week

By ELENA R. TORRIJOS

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has ordered the Philippine Stock Exchange to submit tomorrow a final version of a "credit ring" agreement requiring brokers and dealers to cover for possible collateral shortfalls when trading.

Under the proposed credit ring agreement, members of the PSE and its clearing arm, the Securities Clearing Corp. of the Philippines, will contribute pro-rata the amount of "net negative exposures" of failing brokers exceeding P10 million.

The SCCP has already submitted one version, but the SEC found possible loopholes in it.

The commission earlier approved the SCCP's request that all clearing members with net negative exposures amounting to P1 million or below be exempted from a required daily collateral collection under the mark to market collateral deposit system.

The exemption, however, was subject to the condition that the SCCP, through a one-time contribution by its members or by the PSE on behalf of its members, add to the Clearing and Trade Guarantee Fund P10 million for the sole purpose of covering the aggregate net negative exposures of members whose computed individual exposure were less than P1 million.

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REAL ESTATE

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

Old buildings need upgrading to rival new 'brainy' ones

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

INTELLIGENCE or beauty?

Sounds like a beauty pageant, but new buildings in the country seem to possess both. The emergence of technology-equipped buildings in urban centers has brought pressure on owners of 15-year-old and above buildings that have the brawns (probably the beauty as well), but not necessarily the brains. Suddenly, competition has become stiffer.

So, how does one cope with such building competition and the preference of tenants to dwell and do business in an "intelligent" building?

Demolishing old buildings to make way for new ones need not be

an option. For German firm Siemens Building Technologies, which is currently in the refurbishment of buildings in the Philippines, refurbishing an old building is far cheaper than putting up a new structure. During a press briefing, SBT stressed it sees a market in the country, which it estimated as having 80 percent of buildings that are not new. SBT president and CEO Borys Priadko said the Philippines has a market that is not yet "mature."

Among Priadko's suggestions to make old buildings competitive are to make these structures "eco-efficient" to be at par with world building standards. He added that these should be refurbished with environmental controls to utilize electricity more efficiently, and to provide them with better temperature control and air quality so these structures could become safer and

healthier to stay in for tenants.

Priadko hopes the Philippine economy would experience a turnaround, despite predictions of no upswings in the real estate and construction industry in the next 12 months. He said, however, that SBT still believes in the Philippine construction market's potential.

"There's a large majority of your buildings here that's not been upgraded. For this to become competitive in the next few years, they're all going to have to be upgraded. So we see the potential as there are more pressures for the buildings to upgrade," he said.

SBT's focus, apart from commercial establishments, includes airports, hotels, healthcare facilities, industrial structures, laboratories and clean rooms, shopping centers, sporting facilities, schools, pharmaceutical plants and data centers.

Among SBT's projects were the

Naia domestic terminal and the Pacific Star Building. Other projects were the Olympic Stadium Complex in Australia, the Palace of the Golden Horses in Malaysia, Singapore University, Hyatt Hotels and the Mass Transport Railway System of Taiwan.

SBT also decided to put its multiple business units under one roof—The Pilgrim Building in Makati—a not-so-new building, which by now is technology equipped. SBT's building automation division and services include solutions and lighting control as well as heating, ventilating and air-conditioning systems—what is known as HVAC. It also handles access control, intrusion, video surveillance and danger management systems. Its fire safety systems also include fire detection, gas detection, extinguishing and evacuation.



CREEKSIDE FACELIFT

The Makati Creekside Mall recently got a facelift to give it a fresh look. The building, which turns 14 years old this month offers one of the most competitive rates in commercial space leases in the Makati business district. This 2,212-square-meter, five-story edifice houses establishments such as restaurants, entertainment outlets, and media production studios and accessible to all points in the metropolis. Located on Amorsolo Street, it has sufficient parking slots and offers valet services to tenants and customers.

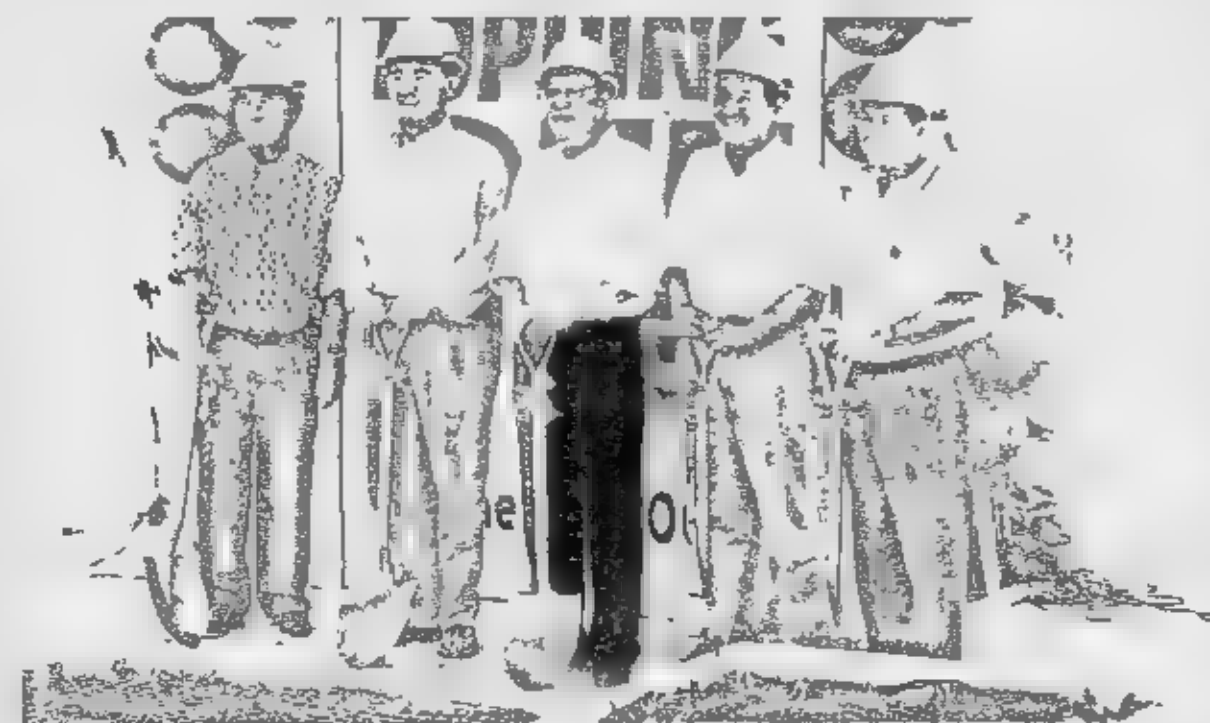
New 40-story condo rises in Legazpi Village

MORE than 30,000 square meters of premium high-rise space will soon be available on Rada Street in Legazpi Village, a short walking distance from Greenbelt Mall overlooking Legazpi Park, as the launch of a 40-story condominium project draws near.

This new Ayala Land venture consists mostly of studios, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units, and some three-bedroom units. Commercial units will be put on the ground floor.

All 370 units will be designed based on Ayala Land's highest standards of quality and property management. These units are ideal for both investors and end-users.

Amenities and facilities include a swimming pool, a social hall, landscaped areas with water features, an air-conditioned lobby, space for day care, play area and a gym. Four elevators will service the residents.



TOPPING OFF CEREMONIES

Robinsons Land Corp., one of the country's largest and most dynamic real estate firms today, recently held the topping off rites of its 3rd mall in the Visayas, the Robinsons Place Iloilo. With the mall structurally complete, Robinsons Place Iloilo is targeted to open by the last quarter of this year. It will be a 3-level shopping mall with over 200 shops, dining outlets, entertainment facilities and service centers. From left are engineer Dennis Abcede, construction manager, DA Abcede and Associates; Frederick D. Go, FLC senior vice president; engineer Joe San Buenaventura, engineering division manager, World Engineering; architect Nicky G. Villanueva, FLC vice president for corporate property planning; and architect Wilam V. Coscoluela, principal architect, WVGA.



ANOTHER HOUSING SITE

Muntinlupa Mayor Jaime Freshed (right) shares light moments with project engineer Joseph Dominia, a housing site coordinator, during an ocular inspection of the new housing project of the city government located at the Soldier's Hills, Barangay Putatan. The project, which is in coordination with the National Housing Authority, is one of the many low-cost housing projects of the administration to address the problems of the poor on houses.

Filinvest introduces new model of Casa Cielo home series in Antipolo City

REAL estate developer Filinvest Land Inc. recently unveiled Diana, its latest Casa Cielo housing series in its rapidly developing township project of Filinvest East County in Antipolo City.

In simple rites held recently at the Mission Hills community of Filinvest East County, company officers present for the groundbreaking were FLI president Joseph M. Yap, consultant Rolie T. Manalita, FLI vice chair Andrew Gotianun Jr. and engineer Winnie Lim.

Blending indoor and outdoor living within its 298-square-meter usable floor plan, Diana's bigger floor area offers more value at less cost. This also allows the homeowner the choice for vertical expansion, adding more options to create more bedrooms or to have a viewing deck, depending on one's lifestyle needs. Whether as a bungalow or a two-story home, Diana gives you value for your money and flexibility, making for a classic home that can easily adapt to the

changing times.

Designed along Mediterranean architecture, the Diana model home offers a timeless classic that serves as the perfect backdrop to your chosen lifestyle. Its charms are perfectly complemented by Mission Hill's relaxing scenery and placid grounds. A well-planned themed community located in the growing township of Filinvest East County in Antipolo City, its immaculately groomed parks are embellished with benches, wide winding roads and

generously sized lot parcels, making you glad to come home every time. Combining the best of all worlds in one haven, Filinvest East County brings together three world-class communities—Highlands Pointe, Mission Hills and Wood Vale—into one master-planned enclave.

The Casa Cielo model homes were unveiled in simultaneous open houses at the Filinvest East County in Antipolo City; at Park Spring in San Pedro, Laguna; and in Mountain View at Capitol Hills, Quezon City.

BCI Asia online services promotes growth of construction industry

BUILDING and Construction Interchange (BCI) Asia's project leads can now be reached through its online construction reports at its website address www.bciasia.com.

According to BCI Asia's country manager JJ Fernandez, this advancement will greatly reinforce their ultimate goal of promoting the growth of the construction industry in the Philippines.

Through e-bulletin, BCI Asia will be more effective in providing construction project information to their clients which will include building products' suppliers, contractors, subcontractors, designers

and consultants.

Said Fernandez: "This will create a level playing field among contractors. Contract bidding using the information from the BCI online service will surely result to higher quality projects, lower development cost. It is our intention to increase the probability of more projects getting off the ground."

In this website, project leads enable construction suppliers and contractors to introduce their product to key decision-makers early enough in the process to have the product specified. This will also enable them to have a constant flow of sales opportunities.

Aside from the future construction activities, e-bulletin provides information on project scope, estimated cost, construction timetable and key contact details that are vital for bidding a contract.

Meanwhile, architect Joseph Palafox of Line Art Design finds an easy access to suppliers of building materials and consultants subscribing. Palafox said that BCI Asia's online report is aggressive as far as trying to reach out to potential clients which will eventually open up lines of communication between users and sellers of building projects and systems.

BCI Asia, the market leader in

construction information started reporting in 1993. This was conceived in answer to the needs of contractors for value information, Fernandez said.

BCI Asia, a nominee for the Asian Innovation Awards by the Far Eastern Review in 1999, is servicing six major cities in the Asia Pacific that include Manila, Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Bangkok. BCI also has an office in Sydney, Australia.

Interested contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, designers and consultants may visit the website and avail of the online service.



FIGARO OPENS IN ORTIGAS BUSINESS DISTRICT

Commercial buildings now offer ground floor spaces to coffee shops and restaurants as an amenity for their tenants. The latest to open in the Ortigas Business District is Figaro Coffee Co. Open from 7 a.m. to midnight, Figaro caters to the businessmen and residents in the area of Emerald Avenue.

Accreditation of construction arbitrators scheduled July 6

THE CONSTRUCTION Industry Arbitration Commission (CIAC) will accredit its fourth batch of construction arbitrators on July 6 at the Grand Ballroom of New World Renaissance International Hotel, Makati Avenue, Makati City. The 16 arbitrators will take their oath of office before Supreme Court Associate Justice Jose C. Vitug.

The 4th batch of trainees is composed of selected nominees of various professional organizations who successfully completed the 80-hour intensive

training program on construction arbitration. The nominees-participants are lawyer Federico Y. Alikpala, managing partner, Lawyers Group; architect Armando N. Alik, partner and business manager, DACY Architects/Planner Co.; engineer Danilo T. Andrada, president, IMAX Construction Management and Consultancy Inc.; lawyer Ma. Clara B. Asuncion, senior associate, Syquia Law Offices; architect Antonio Y. Balde, principal, Balde and Associates, Dean of Architecture, Columbus College; engineer

Ricardo S. Bass, president, DCCD Engineering Corp.;

lawyer Manuel M. Cosica, partner, Romulo Matanza Buenaventura, Sayoc and Delos Angeles Law Offices; engineer Romeo C. David, vice president, Proconsult Inc.; architect Edilberto Florentino, principal, E.F. Florentino, E.C. Florentino & Associates; engineer Antonio I. Goco, president, Proconsult Inc.; lawyer Daphne T. Jerez, junior partner, Picozo Bucoy Tan & Fider Law Offices; engineer Vicente B. Lopez, president, YBL

Infrastructure Project Management Consultancy; lawyer Paulino M. Noto, senior manager, Proconsult Inc.; architect Felicitas A. Pio-Roda, president and CEO, Asian Technicon Managers & Consultants Inc.; engineer Ricardo B. San Juan, business developer, LKG Group; and Leandro A. Viloria, principal, UP Konsult.

The members of the training faculty who have been previously accredited as construction arbitrators include lawyers Alfredo F. Tadiar, lecturer on CIAC Rules of Procedure; Custodio O. Parlate, lecturer

on Case Handling Problems/Solutions and Mediation; Victor P. Lazatin, lecturer on Applicable Rules of Procedure in Civil Actions, and Revised Rules of Court Construction and Supplementary Effect; former Judge Salvador C. Cegueria, lecturer on Ethics/Code of Conduct of the Construction Arbitrators; Dr. Ernesto S. de Castro, lecturer on Construction Disputes in General, Substantive and Procedural Aspects of Arbitration Disputes: An Overview, and the CIAC and Construction Disputes; Felisberto C.L.

Reyes, lecturer on Introduction to the Construction Work Process, Rights and Authority, Relationships, Obligations and Responsibilities of Key Persons and Professionals, and Monitoring and Control Mechanism; and Eliseo I. Evangelista, lecturer on Selected Special Laws, Basic Principles.

Lawyers Jose Grapillon, former Integrated Bar of the Philippines president, and Francis ED. Lam, senior partner of Acera Law were also invited to lecture during the training.

Pag-Ibig Fund seeks Creba help to push housing program

PRESIDENT and chief executive officer Manuel C. Crisostomo of the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-Ibig Fund) has called on members of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Associations (Creba) as "our partners in the private sector" to assist in "enabling us to make home acquisition affordable to Pag-Ibig members and make housing finance sustainable."

Crisostomo spoke before the Creba at its 6th monthly business meeting presided by lawyer Manuel M. Serrano last Thursday at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. A career executive officer (CEO), Crisostomo has served Pag-Ibig Fund in various positions for the last 16 years.

"We are confident," the Pag-Ibig chief said, "that our continuing dialogue and cooperation, along with the wholehearted support of President Macapagal and Secretary Defensor, can only result in the fulfillment of our shared vision." Secretary Michael Defensor is chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council and presidential adviser on housing.

As its major advocacy, Creba has packaged a comprehensive home finance system with a large pool of funds to respond to the housing needs of both members and nonmembers of the Pag-Ibig Fund, Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System. It seeks primary and secondary home mortgage financing to undertake a continuing and viable system aimed at providing some 400,000 housing units yearly, especially for the low-



CRISOSTOMO (with microphone) responds to questions during the Creba monthly business meeting at the Hotel Intercontinental. With him, from left, are lawyer Serrano; Rep. Eduardo C. Zalcita (Parañaque City); Creba executive vice president; lawyer Luis B. Pangilinan Jr., VP for external affairs, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. and overall chair, Creba sports-fellowship committee.

income and underprivileged homeless Filipinos.

Creba has been calling on the government to adopt this comprehensive approach to housing finance and mount an aggressive and systematic housing program amid an increasing backlog of housing units. The shortage is now estimated at 4.5 million units nationwide.

During a recent meeting between President Macapagal and business leaders, Creba national president Charlie V. Goyareb had reiterated the chamber's call

for a "total, systematic and long-term approach" to the crisis of homelessness.

Last month, Creba signed an agreement with National Housing Authority general manager Edgardo D. Pamintuan for Creba members to undertake joint-venture socialized housing projects with the NHA for lower-income families. Pamintuan viewed the NHA-Creba agreement as part of the President's "healing mission" under the government's program for the poor and the underprivileged sector.

In his speech, Crisostomo said Pag-Ibig has forged housing agreement with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police and the local government units of Bataan and Pasig as well as the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. The pension fund has also enlisted five developers to carry out the DILG-PNP housing program for 45,000 units under a P4.2-million sinking fund.

Pag-Ibig Fund has also put up a special housing loan facility for overseas Filipino workers and a housing loan program for middle-income members, and revived the direct developmental loan program for developers, and the Pag-Ibig City Program to provide a ready inventory of completed quality housing units at more affordable prices.

Crisostomo informed Creba the city program will lower project financing costs for participating companies seeking housing for their workers as a joint venture with Pag-Ibig, providing faster investment turnaround. This, he said, will enable developers to increase their housing production and thus lower housing packages for applicants.

Pag-Ibig is also aggressively promoting its overseas program's housing loan benefits for overseas workers with maximum loan upgraded from P500,000 to P2 million. The agency is planning a marketing tie-up with developers in selling housing inventories to these workers. Pag-Ibig overseas offices will do the brokering and marketing for the accredited developers.



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World's top maker of PVC windows, doors now in RP

VEKA of Germany, the world's No. 1 manufacturer of PVC windows and doors, recently introduced its complete product line into the market through its local partner Burovek Phils. Inc.

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in perfect profile. Its quest in providing only the best quality uPVC windows and doors as well as excellent service continues unabated. Veika was tasked by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to design and manufacture PVC doors and windows for space shuttles and space stations.

Veika products are tested by international authorities to ensure compliance with relevant standards which earned for the company the honor of a DIN ISO 9001 certification.

Crown Asia gives all-out to brokers

FOR THIS wife and mother, her lifestyle and her home were the foundation of how she established herself as one of the top brokers for Crown Asia.

Liza Schneider is the first to admit that she has a certain partiality toward Crown Asia's properties having personally experienced what it is like to be a client of this top developer of master-planned subdivisions.

The Schneiders have a modest home in Cottonwood Heights, one of the premiere subdivisions of Crown Asia in the fast-growing city of Antipolo. Cottonwood Heights is master-planned to have an American-countryside ambience and lifestyle. Its location and the masterful blending of the subdivision's development with the natural beauty of the Antipolo countryside assure virtually pollution-free surroundings.

As she talks to clients, Schneider inevitably starts relating the life they live. "Being a resident of Cottonwood Heights, I could vouch for the quality of the houses," Liza says, noting that because they live in the same subdivision as the houses and lots they were



SCHNEIDER

selling, it was easier to connect with their clients.

Liza, a mother of two, said that aside from the obvious advantage of using their personal experiences when they talk to clients, she also points out the all-out support that Crown Asia gives to its sales network.

Crown Asia has carefully thought through the different levels and types of support for their business partners. As the property firm's officials point out that Crown Asia's efforts, although crucial for the sales network to achieve a measure of success, are not the primary reasons for

this accomplishment.

"To succeed in selling real estate you will need the marketing support of your developer," stresses Crown Asia chief operating officer Edgardo G. Santos. But, he further adds, "the bottom line is the effort and hard work and that personal touch that our sales managers, property consultants and business managers put in."

"We are staffed with young dynamic and talented people who have embraced our ethic of working hard and long hours to make sure our sales networks are fully assisted. This in turn inspires our business partners to work even harder," says Santos.

When she began selling Crown Asia's houses and lots, Schneider was a government employee. She has since resigned from her job and is now selling full-time. "It is not only financially rewarding but also professionally fulfilling because of that sense of accomplishment in what you do."

Liza said she and her supportive husband Sidney share in the work when it comes to selling. "We share inputs and this allows us to remain focused and professional in what we do."

Crown Asia's marketing endeavors have also helped them sell more and she has only praises for the realty developer's

employees who are more than willing to help their sellers. Another aspect that has helped Crown Asia's business partners is the holding of regular selling and marketing seminars organized by the property developer as part of its efforts to spur sales.

Liza says the support of Crown Asia has allowed them the luxury of being able to manage their own hours and "believe it or not gives us more time for ourselves and our children."

Those who wish to venture on their own in real estate sales, Schneider says, have to start small "like I did and it helps when you get family and friends to give you word of mouth

advertising and most of all, know the property you are selling. In my case, since we like our home in Cottonwood Heights, our experiences were our best points for selling."

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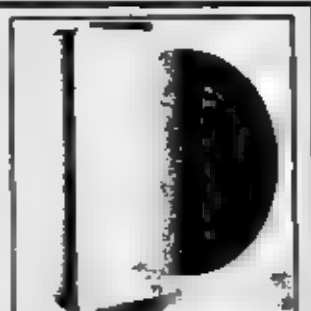
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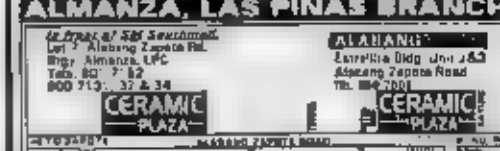
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JOSE V. TECSON, SR.

Former President and General Manager of
 Transcon and C.T.I.

*Passed away in the Grace of Our Lord
 on June 30, 2001 at the age of 81.*

His loving wife Nena H. Tecson; children Peping and Dulce Tecson, Nita and Manny Pilaes, Rudy and Corrine Tecson, Eddie and Pamela Tecson, Maribel and Dennis Sindico, Vicky and Nandy Jayme; grandchildren Joey, Rico and Jaime, Emjay, Jayem, Jaypee and Peejay, Randy, Raffy, Martha and Ramon, Michael and Stephen, Dindin, DJ, Mico and Anton, Katrina, Kristine and Katherine; relatives and friends request the readers to join them in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the White Plains Chapel, White Plains Subdivision, Quezon City.

Funeral Mass will be held on Thursday, July 5, 2001 at 8:00 AM at the White Plains Chapel. Interment follows at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, Tandang Sora, Quezon City

POTENCIANO T. ILUSORIO

*Peacefully joined our Lord
 on June 28, 2001 at the age 88.*

The bereaved members of his family, relatives, friends, associates and staff request for your prayers to guide him through his final journey.

His mortal remains were cremated on June 28, 2001 in accordance with his wishes.

Interment will follow after the 10:30 a.m. Requiem Mass at the Baguio Cathedral on July 3, 2001.

*Please omit flowers. In lieu of flowers,
 donations to the Convent of the Most Blessed
 Sacrament (Pink Sisters, Baguio City)
 or the Ophthalmological Foundation
 of the Philippines will be appreciated.*

*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want,
 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,
 for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff, They comfort me...
 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
 and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Psalm 23:1,4,6

EDWARD ROBERT C. YU

*Died in the grace of our Lord on July 1, 2001
 at the age of 54.*

His beloved wife Evelyn; children Rodney and Roselynn; sisters Georgiana C. Yu, Linda Y. Walker, Diana Y. Chua, and Lydia Y. Yu; nephews, nieces, and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His cremated remains are at the Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills East, Mandaluyong.

Interment will be on Thursday, July 5, 2001 at Christ the King Church, Green Meadows Avenue, Quezon City after the 9:30 a.m. memorial service at Santuario de San Jose

Please omit flowers.



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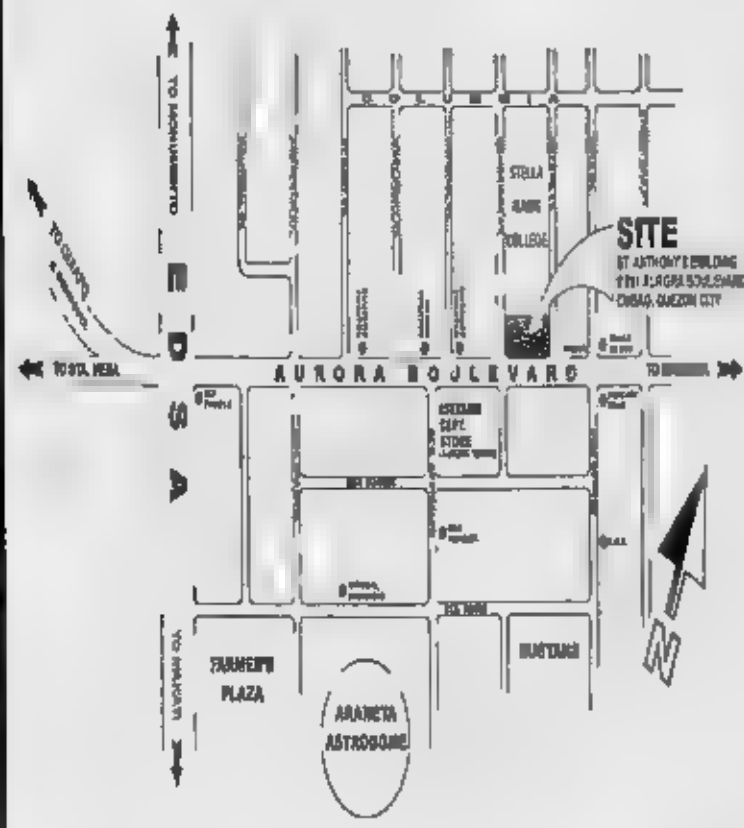
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Our Dearly Beloved

ROSARIO "CHADI" ROSALES

*Peacefully joined our Lord on July 1, 2001
 at the age of 73.*

Her loving nephew and niece Jun and Nina Malvar; and granddaughter Ria Malvar; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal rest of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, July 4, 2001, at the Manila Memorial Park after the 2:00 PM Mass.

JUANA BALDOVINO ALANDY

of Tayabas, Quezon

*Died in the Grace of our Lord on June 30, 2001
 at the age of 88.*

Her children and their spouses Tallo and Cora, Tallo (T) and Toting (T), Baby and Pepito (T), Mei and Jun, Leslie and Emma, Cora and Pio, Mike and Marivi, Chit and Bonnie; grandchildren and her great grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Ermita Chapel.

Interment will be on Wednesday, July 4, 2001 at the Lovely Paradise Cemetery after the 9:30 Mass at Minor Basilica Church, Tayabas, Quezon.

Card of Thanks

The family of

A. Timothy Peterson

(January 21, 1940 - June 16, 2001)

His wife — Patricia B. Licuanan
 children — Carlo and Andrea
 brothers and their families — Anthony and Lisa
 Thomas, Jan and David
 Fred, Mary and Sarah
 mother-in-law — Virginia Benitez-Licuanan
 brother-in-law and family — Francisco, Victoria
 and Ana

thanks all who offered their prayers and comfort.

You have eased the pain of parting and helped us accept God's plan for our beloved Tim — and for us.

CESAR MAGSAYSAY GARCIA

*Peacefully joined our Lord
 on June 30, 2001 at the age of 94.*

His loving wife Josefina Posadas Garcia; children Steve & Jo, Nino & Lalle, Vic & Yollie, Tess & Ernie; grandchildren and great grandchildren, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Chapel A, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Wednesday, July 4, 2001 at La Funeraria Paz Crematorium at 1:00 p.m. Mass will be held at 11:00 a.m.

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A toast to the top

Tuesday, July 3, 2001 marks another milestone for Bonifacio Ridge as it celebrates the topping out of its Phase 1 towers, Cypress Point and Spanish Bay. A prime Global City address, Bonifacio Ridge is a residential project of Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation. Blending its dramatic panorama, together with its state-of-the-art facilities, Bonifacio Ridge is designed to be FBDC's testament to how life should be... boundless, beautiful, brilliant and bountiful.

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LIFESTYLE

CHIRO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor



Why women should strength-train

STRENGTH training is exercise using some type of resistance (dumbbells, barbells, machines, rubber bands, body weight, etc.) to build strong muscles. Some people believe only men need to improve their strength, but the truth is women can benefit from having a stronger body, too. In fact, the benefits of strength training go far beyond firm muscles and a shapely body. There are many surprising health benefits you wouldn't expect from lifting weights (the most common form of strength training).

Aesthetic benefits

These are the beauty-related benefits. Strength training gives you a tighter, leaner body because a firm muscle is more compact and dense compared to a flabby muscle.

Strength training is an essential part of a weight-control program because the more muscle mass you have, the faster your metabolism. Muscle tissue is more metabolically active than fat tissue. In other words, it burns more calories. One of the reasons women gain weight faster as they get older is muscle atrophy. Muscles that are not challenged by strength training become smaller with age. Smaller muscles means less calories burned every day.

Although a woman cannot hope to increase muscle size as dramatically as a man (women have very little testosterone, the male sex hormone), applying the appropriate strength-training techniques can put a little muscle bulk when it is needed to create a more symmetrical figure. For example, if a woman has narrow shoulders and big hips, the shoulders can become a little wider so the hips don't look so big. Conversely, if a woman has thin legs, strength training can make them a little fuller so the lower body matches the bigger upper body.

The secret is basically in the amount of weight you lift and how many times you lift it. To make a muscle bigger, choose a weight that you can only lift for six to eight times before your muscles get tired. For firmer muscles without an increase in size, lift a weight light enough that you can lift it 12-20 times before your muscles

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Aboitiz Juan



get fatigued.

Strength training coupled with flexibility training (stretching exercises) can improve posture by making sure that muscles are balanced. For example, stooped, rounded shoulders can be improved by strengthening the muscles at the back of the shoulders and between the shoulder blades while stretching the muscles in the chest and the front of the shoulders. Bad posture does not only increase the risk of injury in the lower back, it also detracts from the beauty of a woman.

Physiological benefits

These are the health benefits you will not see right away and are not obvious to other people:

- Strength training can help prevent osteoporosis because strong muscles equal strong bones. Scientists believe that when a muscle contracts against resistance, the pulling force it exerts on the bones causes the bones to become denser and stronger. Strength training also helps improve balance so unnecessary falls are prevented.

- It can help an older woman cope with osteoarthritis because strong muscles are better able to absorb the stress around the affected joints.

- Although an aerobic type of exercise (walking, cycling, dancing, jogging, etc.) is the most common exercise recommendation for people with high blood pressure, strength training done properly and safely has also been found to help normalize blood pressure.

- Strength training can reduce total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol (the "bad" kind) and improve the ratio of total cholesterol to HDL (the "good" kind).

- Postmenopausal women tend to accumulate



ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

The benefits of strength training go far beyond firm muscles and a shapely body. It's also one of the ways to live out the golden years in a dignified manner

more fat in their abdomens than in their hips, buttocks and thighs because of the changes in hormone levels. They end up having the same fat distribution pattern as a man—especially the storage of visceral fat. This kind of fat is not found under the skin (this is called subcutaneous fat), but around the abdominal organs. It has been associated with a higher risk of heart disease. Research has found that strength training can significantly reduce visceral or intra-abdominal fat in older women.

- Researchers have discovered that strength training can also help to keep insulin levels normal, which can reduce the risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Psychological benefits

Studies show that having a strong body improves self-confidence and self-esteem in women. Aside from knowing that you look good, knowing that you can take care of yourself physically is a great morale booster.

You cannot separate the body from the mind or vice versa. When you are depressed, it shows in the way you walk and the way you hold

yourself. When you are feeling physically weak, you also feel emotionally and mentally down. Strengthening your body helps to strengthen your mind and emotions.

Independent golden years

This is the one benefit of strength training I always keep in mind when I lift weights. Since I come from a family of people who live long, I will probably make it to my late 90s. For so long as my mind remains intact, I want to make sure I will be a strong and healthy old woman who doesn't need anyone to give her a bath or help her out of a chair or feed her. Strength training is one of the ways I am going to be able to live out my golden years in an independent, dignified manner.

Attention all gym owners and managers: Life-fitness Academy is back. This two-day seminar will be held on July 12 and 13 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. David Welsh, one of the industry's leading management presenters, will talk on "Creating a Winning Team, Success Through Effective People Management." Call Doris at 826-0751/2781.

The Association of Fitness Professionals of the Phils. is holding a Red Cross CPR Certification on July 21 at the Bahay ng Alumni, UP Diliman campus. CPR certification is a requirement for those taking the American Council on Exercise Examinations on Oct. 27. Call Lorna Pinzon at 842-0567 for reservations since space is limited to only 36 people.

For past articles and exercises, visit my website at www.tinajuanfitness.com

The aging process and menopause

BY MILA S. ALORA

HAVING hot flashes and night sweats? Irritable most of the time? Depressed for no reason at all? Cannot remember even the simple task done a few minutes ago or the name of the household help? These are a few of the many health complaints of women aged 45 and up.

Alumni and sorority reunions are now filled with women comparing notes on one's health, the various illnesses affecting the bones, breasts and uterus, the memory pills being taken and the many effects of menopause in their daily lives.

But then men have the same thing, too. Only it is called by a different name—*andropause*, at times called "midlife crisis." It is often characterized by a decrease in the sex drive, crankiness and at times, lack of energy in doing anything at all.

Both sexes are going through a climacteric period, which is a normal part of the aging process. Climacteric refers to the time when both males and females have declining hormonal functions. For women, it encompasses the time before the total stop of menstruation, and for men, it is androgen deficiency.

What exactly is menopause? It is the time when a woman stops her monthly bleeding or menstruation for a year, and changes occur in the body—both before and after. The ovaries that produce important hormones needed to stay healthy suddenly come to a halt. These hormones are estrogen, progesterone and testosterone.

Menopause has three phases. Perimenopause begins in the middle to late 40s and can last 5-7 years and monthly period becomes irregular. Menopause marks the end of monthly bleeding and a major decline in estrogen production. Postmenopause consists of early and postmenopause, which can be five years or so after menopause. The lack of estrogen leads to silent physical changes detrimental to one's health if left unchecked.

In general, most women have menopause between the ages of 45-55. For Filipinas, the mean age is 47 and largely hereditary.

What to do

"Growing old gracefully and healthy are the dreams of everyone past the age of 40, whether male or female. Certainly not impossible but would take into account a lot of work and determination," said Dr. Joan Tan-Garcia, section chief of the Climacteric Clinic or Menopause Clinic of St. Luke's Medical Center, which opened in 1998.

Dr. Tan-Garcia pointed out that for women undergoing menopause, there are important considerations. These are the physical makeup of individuals, the family's medical history, lifestyle and overall attitude toward aging.

As head of one of the first private climacteric clinics in the Philippines, Dr. Tan-Garcia has seen the growing acceptance among modern Filipinas of the help offered by science. This was shown by the increased attendance and enthusiastic response of women who have gone through the free quarterly forum conducted by the clinic and being well-informed on the subject through mass communications. There are also liaisons with various women's groups including nuns for the clinic to give



ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

educational talks on menopause.

An average of 20-30 female patients visit the SLMC's Menopause Clinic per month. For a comprehensive care program, the package cost is P6,800 for outpatients, which includes exams, lab tests and counseling.

Before any medicine is prescribed to any patient, a complete physical examination is done to prevent any contraindication. At the same time, thorough interviews are done as to one's personal and family medical history.

More than 13 tests are conducted. Prominent among them are mammography, dexta (X-ray of the bone), complete blood count, ultrasound (transvaginal for the sexually active and married women, P2 transrectal with pelvic for those who are not, P3 of gall bladder and liver for those hysterectomized), lipid profile, alkaline phosphatase, SGPT and calcium.

The decreased production of female hormones may lead to osteoporosis; an increase in cardiovascular diseases; the once taut and thick skin becomes thinner, drier and wrinkles appear; urine retention becomes difficult with the relaxation of the abdominal and uterine tract muscles. The temporary change in body temperature causes the common complaints of hot flashes and night sweats.

Others may suffer psychological problems such as mood swings where Mommy suddenly becomes "high blood na naman" if not "masungit" and Daddy gets to be easily irritated by trifle matters. There is depression and the feeling of being unloved which may cause sleeplessness and fatigue.

As to the recommended treatments, Dr. Tan-Garcia mentioned the use of HRT, a change of diet and lifestyle. Drinking 10-12 glasses of water, quitting smoking, exercising, watching one's weight and eating less of red meat will go a long way in alleviating the discomforts brought by menopause.

For those who want to go natural, eating *taho* or any soya-based product helps, like what the Okinawans do. In a seven-year study billed The Okinawa Program by Dr. Bradley Wilcox Jr. and featured on the "Oprah" show, Okinawans have a daily intake of tofu and drink tea at least six times a day, which make the inhabitants of the tiny Japanese island free of the symptoms of menopause.

HRT side effects

Addressing the concerns of many as to the side effects of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) like cancer and weight gain, the advantages for outweigh

Growing old gracefully and healthy takes a lot of work and determination

the disadvantages. However, it is not for everyone.

It is only given on a case to case basis depending on the results of the physical examination and interview. Problems may vary and treatments are individualized. Those with a genetic predisposition to cancer should consult a doctor first before going on a HRT program. As to weight gain, a notable increase of 3-5 pounds was noticed for the first-time users but gradually disappeared after sometime. But whether on HRT or not, the tendency to gain weight will always be there because of the slowing down of one's metabolism as one advances in age.

"It should be noted that menopausal and postmenopausal women can now take advantage of the many scientific researches done on HRT. Using them can help restore the feeling of well-being," Dr. Tan-Garcia said.

How safe and affordable are HRT products?

There is a wide selection of HRT products. Some are in tablet form good for 30 days with each tablet taken once a day and costing anywhere from P4-P7 once a day. For high-risk women or those suffering from certain diseases, there is the recommended skin patch.

The combination of HRT with other medicines like calcium and lipid-lowering agents can help hypertensive individuals. Diabetics also benefit from it but definitely not people with liver problems.

Those who do want HRT can take Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulator (SERM), which is tissue specific. It reduces the risk of invasive breast cancer.

In general, using HRT can help prevent osteoporosis and bone loss, heart attacks and strokes, colon cancer and improve short-term memory. Genitourinary problems usually associated with old age are reduced.

Again, like the Okinawans who celebrate age 55 with a big feast because it signals the transition to full adulthood, menopause does not mean the end of having a good life and enjoying it to the fullest.

Dr. Joan Tan-Garcia finished her obstetrics-gynecology residency at UP-PGH. She has extensive postgraduate training in obstetrics and gynecology in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. She has attended numerous seminars and congresses on aging in Japan, Australia, Europe and the United States. She can be contacted at 723-0301 to -20 local 7286.

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Danny dugong makes his pitch

BY ALEX Y. VERGARA

LIKE all mammals, dugongs or sea cows breathe air through their lungs. They also breastfeed their young. Unlike the whale, they don't venture out into the open sea. Instead, these gentle creatures thrive in warm, shallow coastal areas where they rest by day and graze on sea grass by night. They swim alone or in groups and can be quite playful and affectionate with one another. For nearly 60 million years, they lived in peace having no known predators until—you guessed it—people came into the scene.

Through Hong Kong-Shanghai Banking Corp.'s "Hug Me, Save Me" campaign, mallers, especially kids, are beginning to learn more about this endangered species. For every P300-purchase at any Body Shop outlet, shoppers using their HSBC credit cards can choose from among 10 cuddly dugong characters for free.

Each stuffed toy (never mind if some are way off the bluish-gray color of a dugong) comes with a small card that provides a tidbit of information about the animal. What's more, HSBC makes an automatic donation in behalf of the shopper to the bank's Dugong Conservation Program. Those who choose to pay in cash or use other credit cards can also bring home a collectible for P100. The money they give goes to the program as well.

There's Dexter clad in a black basketball shirt and holding an orange ball with his right flipper. Dugongs, the card says, use their flippers to hug and touch objects with, even the anchor lines of boats. They can also be seen tumbling under water or scratching their backs on a huge rock.

Then there are sweethearts Danny and Demi. Thanks to a pair of built-in snaps on their flippers, the couple can be arranged in a hugging position. Like best friends Dindy and Dana, each figure is sold separately.

Or what about cool dude Dave in a tie-dyed shirt and clasp a surfboard? Dugongs are among the most widely distributed "sirenians" in the world, antedating the legend of Divesel by several million years. Their cousins, the more famous manatees, another threatened sirenian, are found in the Western Hemisphere.

Shy mammals

Full-grown dugongs can grow up to three meters and weigh up to 350 kilos. They feed exclusively on sea grass, with adults mowing down close to 300 kilos of grass a day. Despite their size, however, they rarely show themselves to landlubbers. These shy marine mammals widely distributed along coastal areas across the Pacific and Indian Oceans usually swim away when disturbed.

Dugongs can live up to 60 years. They usually give birth to just one calf every three to five years. The gestation period can take up to 13 months. Since a mommy dugong's breasts are located under each of its flipper, the mother appears to hug its young while nursing it. Shared parenting is unheard of.

Records show dugongs thrived all over the Philippines, even in the once-pristine waters of Manila Bay. These days only the coasts off Palawan, Eastern Luzon, Southern and Eastern Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago hold viable populations of dugong.

Indeed, the presence or absence of such creatures is a clear indication of the state of our seas. Expectedly, pollution and dynamite fishing have contributed greatly to the animal's near extinction.

Like dolphins, not a few dugongs have drowned while struggling to free themselves from fishing nets. Those caught alive are often slaughtered for their meat. Past attempts to bottle-feed orphaned dugongs have often failed. Some dugongs die from indirect causes. Erosion, for instance, deprives sea grass of much-needed sunlight and oxygen to thrive.

Global concerns

"Education and the environment are two of HSBC's global concerns," says Laine Santana, HSBC's director for corporate communications. Apart from various education-related projects, the bank has an ongoing environmental-awareness program dubbed "Save the Seas" based in Samal Island off the coast of Davao.

"One of the most important but also most neglected resources in the country is the sea," adds Santana. HSBC found this ironic since the Philippines is an archipelago, its people dependent on the sea's bounties.

Of course, awareness generated by such adorable mascots has its limits. To put some teeth to its project, HSBC is funding a P2-million dugong conservation program on Green Island Bay off the northern coast of Palawan. The bank has tapped the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) to implement it.

Amel Andrew Yaptinchay, director of WWF Phils., identified the area where a sizable number of dugongs has been spotted. "It's impossible to determine how many dugongs are still left in the country," he admits.

Yaptinchay, a licensed veterinarian, wouldn't



MEEK AND MILD. Rescued dugongs, such as this calf pictured with AA Yaptinchay, are sent back to the wilds as soon as they're ready.

Through HSBC's campaign to save dugongs from extinction, kids and adults learn more about these gentle creatures



HUG ME, SAVE ME. Dugong collectible Danny and Demi embrace each other like you and me.

PHOTOS BY ERNE SUMINDO

be surprised if their present number continues to dwindle unless some drastic measures are put into place. Unfortunately, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has yet to declare a dugong sanctuary to help protect and promote public awareness about the animal.

"Although they're not a targeted species," he adds, "some people still hunt the dugong for its supposed medicinal properties." Ironically, hunters have begun losing interest in the dugong. Why? They're becoming harder to find. "It's not worth their time and effort anymore."

Conservation measures

"Our main objective is to drum up awareness on the dugong," says Santana. "We can't do this without the direct involvement of the area's fisherfolk."

Aside from tapping the local government's assistance, Yaptinchay and his team will try to get the community involved. Rather than dictate a litany of dos and don'ts, which is bound to fail anyway, they'll try to get as much feedback as possible from various sectors.

After all, biodiversity is such a big word, its supposed benefits or effects drowned out by the everyday concerns of subsistence fishermen. "We can't just go there and arbitrarily establish a protected area," says Yaptinchay. "Remember, the bay has become so much a part of their lives. They need to be given a say in determining their future. Only then will they be able to fully appreciate such measures in conservation."

It pays to start 'em young. Based on Yaptinchay's experience as a former director of DENR's marine turtle conservation project, one of the most

effective ways to reach out to adults is through their children. Hopefully, these informed youngsters will become the future custodians of the environment. Most teachers are usually open to environmental education as well.

"The project's success and long-term sustainability will depend on the community," says Santana. The project will run for one year beginning this month. "We will try to be as flexible as possible," adds Yaptinchay. "Hopefully, Green Island Bay will become a protected area in the future."

It wouldn't hurt, of course, if Yaptinchay and his team bring loads of stuffed toys to the site, four hours away by land from Puerto Princesa. The kids at Green Island Bay, like their counterparts in the malls, will be informed as well as delighted to have such dugong collectibles.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

BLUE WORLD. The once-numerous dugongs are now threatened with extinction.

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DUGONGS, like Dexter, are playful creatures





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The next time you are in the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, look for Dr. Gloria R. Cristol-Luna, MEDICard Medical Coordinator for the said hospital. Dr. Luna is a Medicine graduate from UERMIMC with residency training in Internal Medicine from the Veteran's Memorial Hospital. She also sub-specializes in Medical Oncology where she received training from UP-PGH. She is a diplomate and fellow of the Philippine College of Physicians, Philippine Society of Medical Oncology, European Society of Medical Oncology and a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. This very busy doctor spends her free time with her husband Cesar V. Luna, M.D. and her two children. For consultations, you may visit Doc Luna at room A-17 (R-20) from 3 PM to 5 PM, Mondays to Thursdays and from 10 AM to 12 noon on Saturdays.

New Corporate Member



IBM Solutions Delivery, Inc., one of the leading solutions provider in the information technology industry today signed its corporate agreement with MEDICard for the healthcare program of their employees and dependents last June 28, 2003 at the Grille Restaurant in Libis, Quezon City. (Seated L - R) Ignacio E. Sevilla, III (Division Manager-Sales and ITS Operations), Paul A. Zaldarriaga (President & Managing Director), Dr. Nicanor D. Montoya (MEDICard President), Luis S. Montoya (EVP & GM). (Standing L - R) Laureano F. Francisco, Jr. (ISDI HRD Manager), Jose T. Marcos (ISDI Division Manager-Management Services), Ma. Lourdes R. Saculles (ISDI Chief Finance Officer), Leah F. Lima (ISDI Sr. HR Coordinator), Amy C. Cayagan (MEDICard Account Executive) and Voltaire R. Victoria (MEDICard Marketing and Sales Manager).

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. **BE HEARD AND BE READ.** You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOKA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. HV Delta Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphila.com. For membership inquiries, please call 810-2399 and look for Ms. Joy Mendiola. TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. Log on to www.medicardphila.com

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Should we establish a separate department of culture?

"SO how do you propose to solve our national dilemma and start reforming our flawed Filipino mentality and consciousness that you so well expressed in your article of May 22?"

This is the challenge that several readers hurled at me after "telling us what the problem is with our Filipino thinking." What do we do next?

They are right. Let's stop talking and criticizing if we can't offer any positive solution. So here are my thoughts on the subject.

We can attack the problem on two levels, the micro or individual basis and the macro or national scale. In both cases, the approach should be multisectoral.

On an individual and social level, we can start discussing these issues about our Filipino mentality, values and consciousness in an honest and objective manner. Let's not start blaming anybody or any group. But start from within. Civic and professional groups should focus attention on these topics during their meetings, rather than concentrate on some political or trivial topics like the peculiar manner an ex-senator enunciates her words or that latest love interest of a particular actress.

The mass media, i.e. the producers and writers of television and radio programs, should create new shows that highlight our typical way of thinking about our country and our people and change these to something positive and worthwhile. Newspaper stories should give more space to positive developments, accomplishments and incidents in our country, rather than to corruption, crime, scandals and other negative news. This may eventually help us change our perception about our society and culture and give us some needed hope.

Doable

On a national scale, I would like to bring out something that has been simmering in my mind for a long, long time, which I believe is "doable," as a former president used to say.

I strongly propose that the government establish a separate and independent Department of Culture rather than lump this function under one huge Department of Education, Culture and Sports as it is right now.

DECS has already a lot of problems to tackle as it is. It can't be burdened with further issues involving culture, not to mention sports. That's why these two last functions are dismally neglected. The Secretary of Education has simply no more time to attend to them adequately. His hands are already full.

If we have a separate and independent Department of Culture, like what other countries have,

INNER AWARENESS



Jaime T. Licaucio

we may at last begin to reform our negative cultural traits and values.

Take France, for example. This European country has a Minister of Culture that studies, analyzes, preserves, interprets and promotes French culture. It ensures that the French way of thinking and way of life will retain its pristine beauty, power and influence over the people. The French take great pride in their culture.

In the Philippines, the function of the Secretary of Culture shall be to study those cultural traits and values that are inimical to our growth and development as a people, and try to establish policies and create programs to counteract them.

The proposed department should promote the more positive side of Filipino culture, especially our indigenous esoteric beliefs and practices, and see how these can be integrated in all aspects of Filipino life, including the family, economy, the arts and government bureaucracy. It can begin to study and define the true Filipino soul, if such a thing exists.

The average educated Filipino seems to be more knowledgeable about western culture than his own. He even gets embarrassed discussing his own Filipino culture and way of life. He thinks erroneously that, "we are never as good as other countries." Have you ever heard or seen any government or private cultural program that promotes our indigenous esoteric culture, our supernatural beliefs and traditions? Does the cultural center ever show anything about our esoteric cultural heritage? But we have plenty of Broadway or Hollywood type of shows and programs.

I do not know where we got this attitude of "xenophilia" or love of things foreign to us. This is why even our locally made products cannot compete with foreign ones. Our own people do not patronize our own products. Don't you think there is something wrong with the way we Filipinos think about ourselves?

We seem to have no sense of national pride, no sense of history and no sense of nationhood. We still think like primitive tribesmen, the tribe of Ilocanos, the Igorots, the Cebuanos, the Warays, the Pampangos, the Tagalogs, etc. Even when abroad, Filipinos, in general, do not identify with the whole country. If there are exceptions to this, they are few and far between.

Cultural pygmy

The problem with the current governmental and private cultural efforts is that their activities and objectives are confined to promoting the exotic or outward (even borrowed) culture of the Philippines, but they completely neglect the more basic and more important hidden or esoteric indigenous culture of our people. But unless we bring this out and study it and see its importance to our being Filipinos, we will forever be a cultural pygmy in the eyes of the world.

So I propose that legislation be enacted creating the Department of Culture—separate from and independent of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports. And the faster this is done the better for the future of this country.

But whoever is appointed to head this department should have a strong background in the esoteric and indigenous culture of the Philippines, not only a strong sense of nationalism and sense of history for the esoteric or hidden culture is the true measure of any nation's culture, not the outward, mostly borrowed, culture propagated by the traditional purveyors of Philippine culture. Furthermore, its head should have a fixed term of office and should be shielded from political influence and machinations.

These suggestions alone will not bring about an immediate change in our ingrained negative way of thinking, but hopefully it will be the start toward a positive direction and free our people from a feeling of helplessness.

Some people, however, disagree with my proposal. One is my high school classmate who is now a doctor of medicine, a frustrated *balik-bayan*, Dr. Roberto Jimenez (brother of well-known but controversial socialite Baby Arenas). Bobby wrote me to say, "No. Another department will not solve anything. Pinoys are masters in the perversion of things when implemented. Take the Party List System, for example. What would help is if we could send some bad people to jail—including those who did the corrupting."

Another dissenter, a lady listener of my radio program, said, "Change can only come from below, from the grassroots and never from the bureaucracy." They both have a point.

I still believe, however, that the change should come from within each and every Filipino, without exception. If we don't heed this call soon, then may God have mercy on our country and our people.

E-mail jlicaucio@geocities.com. Visit his website at www.angelfire.com/journal/licaucio

SLPMC marks 8th year

ST. Luke's Pain Management Centre celebrates its 8th anniversary from July 9-13 that includes activities such as an exhibit and a free clinic. The highlight of the week-long celebration is a lay forum titled "Real People, Real Pain," on July 10, 9 a.m.-12 nn at the medical center's second floor conference room. Call St. Luke's Pain Management Centre at 723-0301 local 5416.

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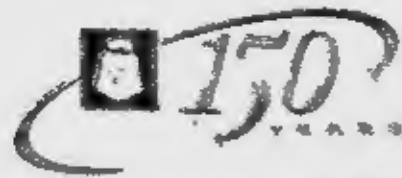
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Happy Birthdays: Take time out to smell the roses. You've been working way too hard. It's time to sit back and review. Decide what will make you happy and go after it. It's your turn to shine, so stop waiting for a time when you don't feel obligated to do for others, for that day will never come. Your numbers: 3, 18, 22, 25, 34, 38

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You will be tempted to spend money you don't have. Be careful if you are forced to deal with people who are promising you the world. You need to do a little research before you make a decision.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You will meet romantic possibilities if you get out with friends. Your ability to be mysterious and enticing will make you difficult to resist.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Your best bet will be work today. You can make your point heard if you voice your opinion to superiors. Advancement can be yours for the asking. Don't be afraid to speak your mind.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You will want to exploit your creative talents. Don't worry if someone doesn't like your style. You have to please yourself when it comes to artistic ventures.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't let someone you live with ruin your mood or your day. Stay calm and focus on getting your chores done. Plan to get together with friends who won't provoke you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You will want to get out with your friends. You need to spend some quality time just reminiscing. You may even want to plan an outing that will include your mate. Travel for pleasure should be on your agenda.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Business gestures of friendliness are likely at social functions. Be careful of empty promises concerning business. Avoid joint financial temptations. You would be wise to work on your own.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't be too quick to judge others. You may have invalid information that will cause you to make wrong choices. Self-improvement projects will be successful and satisfying.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Uncertainty regarding your direction is likely. Look into career choices and courses being offered. Beware of individuals who are not reliable or well-known to you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Sudden romantic infatuations could lead to a serious and prosperous connection. If you join intellectual or cultural groups, you will meet individuals who stimulate you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Business trips will appear to be fruitful; however, watch out for empty promises that could end up being quite costly. Don't celebrate before you sign the deal.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Travel plans should be made. You can start self-improvement projects that will enhance your appearance. Avoid letting others influence your decisions. You have to follow your intuition.

Birthday Baby: You have an insatiable need to discover and will always be traveling down whatever avenue promises to lead to a little adventure. You are bright, outspoken and open-minded.

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA



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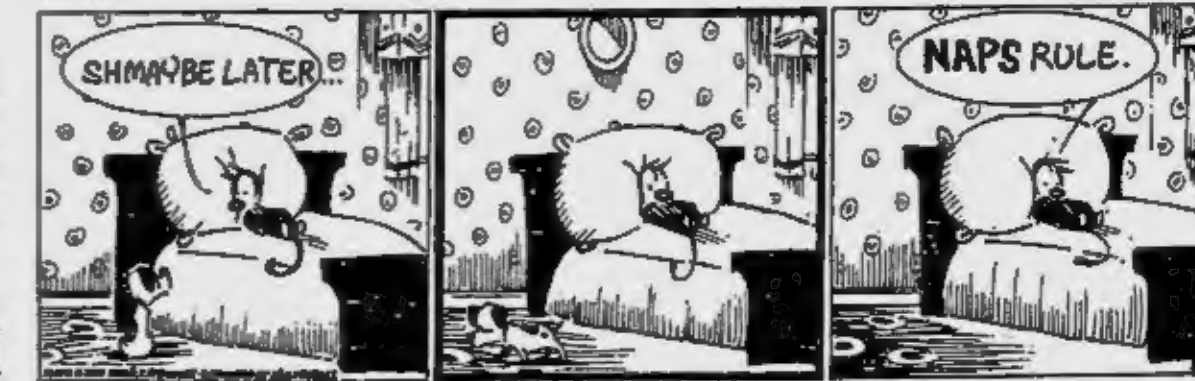
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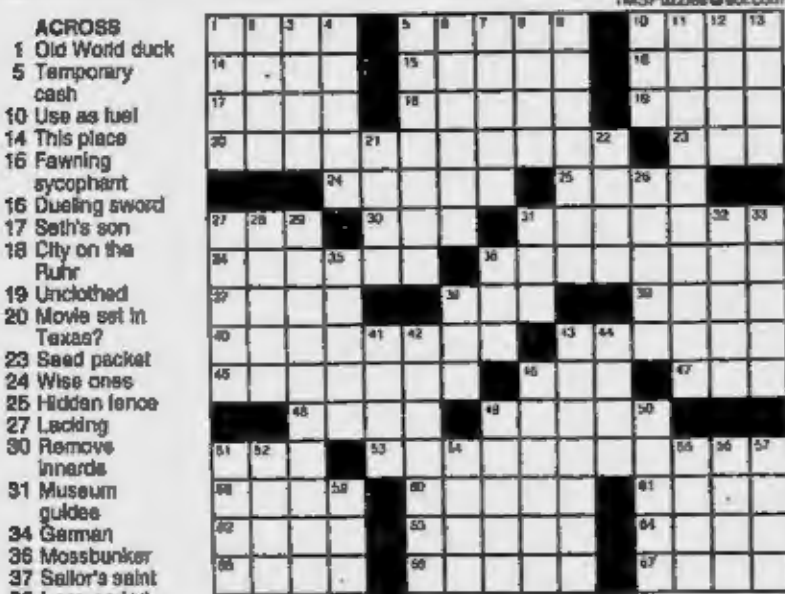


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